Elusive Phoenicians | Perceptions of Phoenician identity and material culture as reflected in museum records and displays

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Abstract

This project aims to investigate the part played by different historical and modern perceptions of Phoenician culture and identity in the presentation and interpretation of what is (and has been over the last 100-150 years) regarded as Phoenician material culture in different Mediterranean and European museums. Given the chequered history of perceptions of Phoenicians in different national and intellectual contexts from antiquity until relatively recently, it seems likely that perspectives on what constitutes objects of Phoenician material culture will also have varied from place to place and from time to time. The research is based on an appreciation of accounts of, and attitudes to, Phoenicians from antiquity onwards, which have undoubtedly fed into more modern European views. This is gained from key ancient (Greek, Roman and Biblical) sources, as well as more modern (especially 19th and 20th century) European writings, both literary and archaeological/historical. The core of the research focuses on museum displays and records pertaining to Phoenician material culture. Museum displays and archives are investigated to see what is identified as Phoenician, why it is identified as such, and how it is interpreted, as well as whether views of what is Phoenician have changed over time. The project therefore focuses on interpretation aspects at the level of the museum, tracking mappable trends, at the level of the labelling tracking stereotypes, and at the level of artefacts tracking stylistic definitions of the term Phoenician. It lays these patterns against the literary perceptions, showing the importance of contextuality within the framework of defining and interpreting Phoenician identity.

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Chapter 1 | Defining, Displaying, and Labelling

Introduction

This thesis aims to explore perceptions of Phoenician identity in museum collections, basing itself on accounts of the Phoenicians in literature and popular culture from antiquity to the present. These attitudes to the Phoenicians have undoubtedly impacted the way in which associated collections have been perceived and led to their current displays in museums. This project will thus investigate the displays of Phoenician collections in twenty museums of Europe and the Mediterranean, taking into consideration several factors which may have impacted them. Some of the main research questions it addresses are concerned with the varying interpretations of what constitutes Phoenician material across different museums; in what way is this material presented and how does it fit into the narrative of the different museums; what the reasons behind the present display of Phoenician material are; and how does this inform perceptions and interpretations of Phoenician identity. The main objective is to acquire an overview of perceptions of Phoenician collections in museums in order to understand how the definition of Phoenician identify shifts and changes according to a number of factors such as location, time period, and different agendas.

The thesis will be structured in three parts, the first of which consists in an introduction to the main stakes linked to perceptions and displays (Chapter 1) and an overview of literary perceptions of the Phoenicians (Chapter 2). The second part of the thesis will focus on analysis of museum displays, beginning with mappable trends and patterns at the level of the museum (Chapter 3), followed by an overview of the stereotypes associated with the Phoenicians at the level of the labelling (Chapter 4), and a discussion of style as an attribute to define objects as Phoenician (Chapter 5). The third part of the thesis will be dedicated to bringing these findings together in a discussion of what constitutes Phoenician identity in museums displays (Chapter 6), bringing the thesis to a close with a conclusion focused on contextuality (Chapter 7).

This first chapter will be dedicated to introducing key concepts I will exploit in this work. It will follow a structure starting with specific examples of artefacts and moving on to more general concepts and concerns, from labelling to the space of the museum, in order to start illustrating some of the issues linked with the displays of artefact that have been called 'Phoenician' straight away. Through these examples, this first chapter therefore sets the framework for the thesis and begins to define the main stakes linked to a study of museum displays.

Displays

Objects and experiences

Anyone visiting the exhibition *Assyria to Iberia at the dawn of the Classical Age* at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in 2014, or *La Méditerranée des Phéniciens de Tyr à Carthage* at the Institut du Monde Arabe in 2007 would have come across a tridacna shell decorated with carvings and used most likely as a container for cosmetics (Figure 1). The shell is part of the collection of the British Museum, purchased in 1852, and it is not currently on display. It was probably found in Vulci and is dated to the 7th-6th century BC (*Cosmetic Vessel,* n.d.). The picture becomes more complicated when considering its place in the catalogue of the British Museum, which classifies it as Phoenician, Etruscan, and/or Eastern Mediterranean, and places it within the Department of Greek and Roman Antiquities. I will be addressing these discrepancies later, but for now, let us come back to the hypothetical visitor of the aforementioned exhibitions. In the context of an exhibition, especially one centred on Phoenician culture, they would not have been given all of the information mentioned above. Rather, the tridacna would have been presented as a Phoenician piece, erasing all ambiguities for the visitor. In fact, it may well be that these ambiguities are the reason why this piece is not displayed at the British Museum. It might raise questions that the museum cannot solve in terms of its current organization, and therefore it opts for the solution of leaving the shell in storage rather than imposing a label on it that would not be able to take into consideration the scope of intersecting implications triggered by this object.



Figure 1: Tridacna shell cosmetic container from Vulci. © Trustees of the British Museum.

There are many other objects on display at many other museums that are also linked with the appellation 'Phoenician'. Sometimes, like in the case of the sarcophagus of Eshmunazar (Figure 2), it is because they feature Phoenician writing, and in these instances, it is therefore quite straightforward and unproblematic. However, there are countless examples which present similar challenges to the tridacna cosmetic container. Museum visitors from around the world are confronted every day with an ivory furniture fitting, a metal bowl, a bronze statuette, a glass bead, or even a piece of pottery called 'Phoenician'. In the overwhelming majority of cases, they are not provided with information as to why a certain object is called 'Phoenician', what are the properties of this artefact which allow us to designate it as 'Phoenician'.

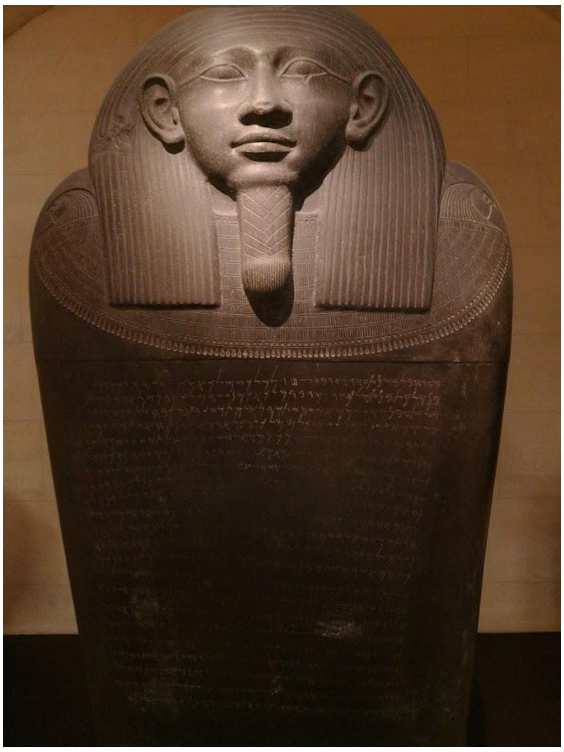


Figure 2: Sarcophagus of Eshmunazar, king of Sidon, 6th century BCE, at the Louvre. Photo author's own.

Because historically museums have been considered to be hubs of universal learning, and still often advocate themselves as such despite the shift away from empirical definitions of these institutions, visitors seldom question the information they are given in museums (Skeates 2002, 110). Throughout this project, my task as an archaeologist will be exactly this. I will be deconstructing displays of Phoenician collections in order to gain an understanding of how different perceptions of Phoenician identity came into being. Before delving further into the depths of my research, I would like to elaborate on the importance of rethinking perceptions in museums, which might not seem relevant at this point.

I have started with a single artefact rather than with a long theoretical thread on museums, material culture, and identity for two reasons. The first one is that I firmly believe that a theoretical discussion does not need to be in the realm of the abstract and unintelligible. Archaeology has for a long time been divided between theorists and materialists, especially in terms of publications, but a material-based study should not imply a detachment from theory, and vice-versa (Barringer and Flynn 1998, 7). I will be referring to specific artefacts, collections, and museums many times throughout this thesis; and therefore it only makes sense to start introducing them from the very beginning.

The other reason why I chose to take an approach working backwards in this chapter, from single objects to archaeological concepts, is because a museum artefact is often the first encounter someone has with a past culture (Dudley 2012, 2). It is also my starting point in the methodology I am following in my fieldwork in museums, in that the first step I take is to look for objects labelled as Phoenician.

Being relatively familiar with the objects already, I obviously experience them in a completely different way than most audiences do. Of course, different people can and usually do experience the same object in different manners (Wood and Latham 2013, 57). Each person will interact with a certain artefact in a certain manner, and this will affect their perception of it. For instance, my knowledge of the background information about the tridacna shell is what allows me to question the interpretation of this object, but someone seeing it for the first time might accept this classification, or perhaps be curious about other aspects of the shell such as decoration technology, or even compare it to their own experience of cosmetic containers. There are countless ways in which audiences can engage with museum objects, and my aim here is not to list them all individually, but to highlight that artefacts can never be universally understood.

With this in mind, let us go back to my earlier point about first encounters. Every person who has been to a museum has at some stage been exposed to an object which served as their initial point of contact with a certain culture. The object functions as a key to an entire civilization. Its symbolic powers are extraordinary. Single objects act as representatives of cultures, whether intentionally or not. This is fascinating but it can also be very dangerous. Associating particular people with particular artefacts is a powerful way to foster stereotypes, and as we will see in the next chapter, Phoenician culture carries its fair burden of stereotypes inherited from literature and popular culture already. To take an example, a few of the famous metal bowls that have been found across the Mediterranean (albeit not in Phoenicia) carry marks or inscriptions in Phoenician (Figure 3). This has naturally led to museums labelling them as Phoenician and exhibiting them accordingly. However, not all of the metal bowls are inscribed, but they are all perceived as Phoenician, both by archaeologists and by museum audiences (Feldman 2014, 116). In addition, they are not all regrouped in the same museum, so a visitor encountering one of them at the Cyprus Museum would instantly associate a similar looking bowl in the British Museum with what they now consider to be Phoenician, even though the bowls probably came from entirely different contexts, were manufactured and used by entirely different people, and carried entirely different meanings when they were in use. Today however, they are part of an



Figure 3: Bronze bowl from Nimrud, 8th century BCE, at the British Museum. Photo author's own.

assemblage, and we will be returning to this question of how such an assemblage is formed in the last part of this chapter.

The role of the museum

For now, let us take a step back and consider artefacts in the context of the museum. The ways in which audiences experience objects is tightly linked to artefact biographies, a concept incorporating the shifting meanings of artefacts through their history of production, use, and discard. From the context of excavation (scientific, amateur, or looting), collection, research, final selection, and showcase planning, there are a myriad of factors influencing the conditions in which an artefact is perceived within a museum (Moser 2010). Many decisions are taken within the museum, such as positioning and placement. For instance, the sarcophagus of Eshmunazar at the Louvre was recently repositioned vertically, in order to offer a better view of the inscription on the face of its lid. This is clearly not the way the sarcophagus was placed in its original context, but since it features the longest recovered Phoenician inscription, the curators of the Louvre have chosen to emphasize this feature (Le Meaux 2018, pers. comm.). A comparable example would be the sarcophagus of Ahiram at the Beirut National Museum. Until relatively recently, the sarcophagus was presented open, with its lid standing next to it, in order to show the reliefs which decorate it, especially since the sarcophagus is a relatively tall one, meaning that the average adult would have trouble seeing the lid if it was closed. However, the current team has chosen a display that emphasizes the inscription on the side of the sarcophagus rather than the lid. The inscription is of great importance because it is the oldest attested inscription in Phoenician and testifies to a possible reuse of the sarcophagus (Markoe 1990, 21). In addition, the sarcophagus of Ahiram is one of the highlights of the Beirut National Museum. Having its lid stood up means that it would have to be supported against a wall, which would compromise the central position it occupies in the museum (Wilmotte 1997).

The above examples illustrate how monumental pieces can be affected by curatorial choices but also by their own stories based on research that was done on them. I have focused on sarcophagi here, but this is usually the situation of objects of all shapes and sizes. To illustrate this further, we can think of the metal bowls and ivories which have stylistically been defined as Phoenician (I will be coming back to the implications of stylistic labelling in the following paragraphs) but have not been found in Phoenicia to this day. The different museums owning such pieces must therefore ask themselves the question of where to place these objects, especially in the case of museums with a geographical organization. Should the ivories from Nimrud all be regrouped with other objects from Assyria or should they be on display with other Phoenician artefacts? It all depends on the aspect the museum wants to emphasise. In other words, we can imagine all the ivories from Nimrud being grouped together in order to highlight their place in Assyrian royal furnishings, just as well as we could imagine the 'Phoenician group' exhibited in a showcase featuring other artefacts of traditional (in the academic

sense) Phoenician manufacture such as metal bowls or glass. In fact, it might not be impossible or contradictory to find both displays in the same museum, as is the case for the ivories at the British Museum.

In reality though, it is challenging to encounter the same type of artefact displayed in more than one way at the same museum[1]. This is because museums usually tend to focus on one curatorial paradigm tying together their entire collection. This is even the case in museums with very large and eclectic collections. For instance, since 2015, the management of the Louvre has asked all departments to redo their labelling in order to comply with new guidelines centrally elaborated and shared across the entire museum (Le Meaux 2018, pers. comm.). Given that the collection includes pieces as varied as archaeological artefacts, paintings, and sculptures, this reform seems extremely ambitious and challenging. The rationale behind it is to provide the visitor with a more homogenous experience (a questionable motive given that the Louvre prides itself in the diversity of its collection).

This echoes another issue when it comes to the treatment of artefacts in museums: the question of art versus archaeology. In many museums, especially those with composite collections, artefacts have historically been treated as artworks. This means that often, the information about their context and biography was disregarded to the profit of their aesthetic value. Phoenician material has been lucky in a sense because it was initially regarded as crude craftsmanship, not worthy of the admiration geared towards Greek art, a view that has had repercussions until today (Aubet 2001, 3). This means that Phoenician objects have been less stripped of contextual sense than Greek ones, and that the majority are treated as archaeological material in museums today. Still, the line between archaeology and art remains unclear, and museums often face challenges positioning themselves along it. To illustrate this, we can come back once again to the example of the Nimrud ivories, which have been considered to be Phoenician art but are also Assyrian material culture (Curtis 2014, 58). In fact, as Livernai (1998, 18) puts it:

> "The functional character of artistic craftsmanship is a general fact applicable to the whole of the ancient world, and the idea of art for art and modernity alone. Why then insist so much on this point, to make it a peculiar feature of the Phoenicians?"

Since the inception of the earliest self-designated ones in the 18th century, museums have constantly been redefining themselves. Institutions such as ICOM have been attempting to consolidate the premises of what a museum should be (*Museum Definition,* n.d.):

> A museum is a non-profit, permanent institution in the service of society and its development, open to the public, which acquires, conserves, researches, communicates and exhibits the tangible and intangible heritage of humanity and its environment for the purposes of education, study and enjoyment.

[1] I am referring here to Phoenician collections specifically.

Because it strives to be inclusive, this definition is also very general. By this I mean that while every museum can (or should potentially be able to) recognize itself in it, it cannot suffice to describe the mission of any given museum. This is because different museums have different objectives, audiences, collections, and self-proclaimed roles (Falk and Dierking 2000). This naturally re-joins my earlier point on the fact that artefacts are experienced differently by different people. Adding to the personal variable, the museum environment is also responsible for the way one perceives an object, being curator, researcher, or visitor. For instance, a visit to the American University of Beirut Archaeological Museum, a relatively small museum featuring a regional collection, would not generate the same experience as a visit to the British Museum, an international blockbuster institution; even though one might encounter very similar artefacts in both museums. Similarly, encountering the same artefact in the British Museum in 1890, 1950, or 2015 would always be a different experience. Therefore, the way in which museums are governed, geared, and set up, as well as their historical trajectory affect how collections are exhibited, interpreted, and perceived.

Labelling

Museums and simplification

Another factor to consider while tackling perceptions of artefacts and collections is the process of interpretation and labelling. Once again, this process will inevitably be affected by a series of factors ranging from condition of excavations to curatorial guidelines. Most importantly, labels are restricted by space and design concerns. Curators are often given a word limit for their labels, especially when these need to feature two or three languages (Serrell 2015, 106). Inevitably, this means that all the information a researcher or a curator might possess about an artefact or assemblage can never be communicated in its entirety through a primary museum experience (Shanks and Tilley 2016, 94). Secondary sources such as audio guides are sometimes available to provide more information on the object. The website of the British Museum, with its collection database available online for free, makes for a good example of further interpretation. For instance, a visitor encountering the ivory plaque showing a lioness attacking a man would be given information about its date, findspot, and material through the label (Figure 4). However, they would have to resort to the website to learn that this plaque is actually inscribed and that it has a parallel in the Iraq Museum. However, in 2015, only 3% of visitors to the British Museum used audio guides, and it is probably safe to assume that an even



Figure 4: Ivory plaque from Nimrud, 8th century BCE, at the British Museum. © Trustees of the British Museum.

smaller number consulted the online catalogue as a complementary tool to their visit (Mannion et al. 2015). This means that the overwhelming majority of visitors are only exposed to the information provided on labels. Therefore, most people perceive museum objects through an interpretative and curatorial filter.

Because of space restrictions, curators have to make choices as to what to include in labels (Serrell 2015, 97). Of course, this will vary from one museum to another, but visitors will invariably be given a simplified version of the information (except in cases where not much is known about the object in the first place, but these are becoming quite rare). In addition to simplification imposed by spatial restrictions, museum curators also simplify labels for matters of accessibility. Often, archaeologists use technical jargon that has to be adapted for the general public. It is also not uncommon to find that archaeological publications can sometimes be quite embedded in an inaccessible academic framework which dictates their style (although this does not always have to be the case, and many archaeological studies are written in an approachable manner). Part of the role of curators in interpretation is therefore to translate such a wealth of information into engaging understandable text. This obviously implies many challenges, like questions of selecting and prioritising, but most importantly it means that labels act as filters for artefacts and assemblages.

Some recent studies have argued for a return to materiality and advocate a shift away from labelling and the focus on the informative value in objects (Dudley 2010). In this way, artefacts would be experienced for what they are rather than what they represent, with the visitor engaging with them in a more sensorial and personal manner. In application, this would leave objects stripped from any sort of labelling. While this approach might be interesting for some collections, mainly artistic ones, it seems counterintuitive when applied to archaeological assemblages. Experiencing archaeological collections is still very much perceived as a learning activity rather than an immersive sensorial event (Mastandrea et al. 2007, 180). While with artistic collections the educational aspect is more subject to debate in that art lends itself more flexibly to an interpretative curve, archaeology remains perceived as a more scientific discipline, which inevitably acts as a source of knowledge. When people visit archaeological museums, they are usually looking to learn something from the experience (Mastandrea et al. 2007). This is why labels are inseparable from artefacts, while at the same time binding them with meanings. Labels are interesting because they both condition perceptions and are conditioned by them. They affect the perceptions of visitors receiving information about the artifacts and assemblages, and they are dictated by the perceptions of archaeologists and curators, therefore falling into a middle ground of interpretations.

Archaeological labels and identities

We have thus established that museum labels are essentially a shortened, simplified interpretation of archaeological analysis. The information they provide is what is perceived and retained by the majority

of people interacting with artefacts and assemblages. As we have just seen, these can often be taken at face value, without further questioning. In many senses, archaeological collections in museums are still caught in the wake of archaeology's greatest complex: the quest for universal truth (Hodder 1991; Walsh 2002, 36. Although this tendency has started to fade since the inception of post-processualism, and most archaeologists now realize that they will never be able to reach accurate reconstructions of the past (and have therefore ceased to pretend to), museums are still somewhat anchored in this paradigm (Barker 2010, 295). This probably has to do with the idea that museums are supposed to provide renderings of the past. For non-archaeologists, they are the places where cultures materialize, literally. I have already talked about museum objects acting as cultural symbols. Museum labels help put these objects, and therefore cultures back in context, and they are generally accepted because they do not usually offer alternative interpretations. A museum display can be incredibly interactive and engaging, but it can only say so much.

This is where we have to take another step back and have a look at the information sorted and filtered to create the labels, information which in ideal cases comes from archaeology. Of course, looted or illegally excavated material which has been acquired by museums (not a rare occurrence for Phoenician material) goes through a slightly different analytical procedure, but it still has to go through an archaeological evaluation before being interpreted and exhibited. For instance, the now-resolved controversy surrounding the Nora stele (Figure 5) forms an important part of this object's history and is of prime significance for the history of Phoenician expansion in the Mediterranean, but the label of the stele cannot include all this information. This object has been used to determine the *terminus ante quem* for the arrival of the Phoenicians in Sardinia, now commonly assigned to the 9th century BC (Moscati 1968; Bernardini 2008). Museum collections around the world are filled with such artefacts, which have been ascribed to the Phoenicians and used to prove their establishment in certain places. However, as a growing number of archaeologists are fully aware of, pots do not equal people (Quinn 2018).

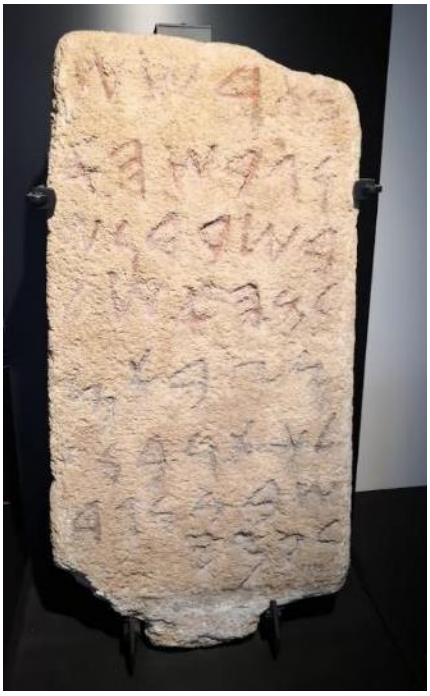


Figure 5: Stele of Nora, 9-8th century BCE, at the Museo Archeologico Nazionale, Cagliari. Photo author's own.

The label 'Phoenician' has been imposed by archaeologists since the 19th century, out of a typical desire to match classical literature to material remains. If we trace back the uses of the term 'Phoenician' to designate a specific population, we find that up until the 1970s, this was not very well defined. Phoenician could mean anything roughly originating from the central Levant, between the Early Bronze Age and the Classical period. As we will see in later chapters, this broad definition is still applied in some museums. So it was not until Moscati's

input in the second half of the 20th century that scholars began to restrict the use of 'Phoenician' to the Iron Age (Salle 1995, 555). The logical reasons behind this shift are the first occurrences of the Phoenician alphabet, which match these dates, and the fact that the word 'Phoenician' only appears in Greek literature starting this period. However, questions can be raised concerning this delineation.

First of all, the more archaeology advances in the region, the more there seems to be clear continuity in the material culture between the Late Bronze Age and the Iron Age (Aruz 2014, 2; Tubb 2014, 132; Fontan 2007, 18). It is therefore becoming obsolete to insist on extending the 'crisis' that affected Egypt and the Hittite empire around 1200 BCE to the central Levant (including Cyprus). Most scholars who study the Phoenician world today seem to agree that their commercial activity was not triggered by Assyrian pressure, as was previously thought, but that it was an extension of the Late Bronze Age Mediterranean trade, tailored to the exploitation of new market dynamics (Aubet 2008, 179). As Sommer suggests, the Phoenicians must have had relatively good knowledge of the Mediterranean sites they colonized, and this knowledge must have been a legacy from centuries of maritime activity (Sommer 2007, 100). This is another argument in favour of continuity in the region. In my master's research I have also been able to note some cohesion in the material culture of the Phoenician mainland, and this has led me to the second question here (Sassine 2014).

If the Phoenicians are indeed the same people that have been living in the central Levant since the Bronze Age, and if we accept the common delimitation based on the invention of the alphabet, is the word 'Phoenician' relevant at all to designate the people? I have no objections to using the term 'Phoenician' for the language, but a language cannot be equated to a people, especially since we have just discussed the likelihood of the same people living in the same area before and after they began to use this language and alphabet. Moreover, some languages can be spoken by more than one cultural group. To add to this, we have to stress that the term 'Phoenician' was a Greek invention, and that there is no recovered inscription made by a self-proclaimed Phoenician, i.e., this term was never used by the actual Phoenicians to refer to themselves in the Iron Age, as far as we know (Aubet 2001, 6).

I believe that the term Phoenician is too general, and that the picture both on the Levantine coast and in the Mediterranean must have been much more complex. Therefore, I understand Moscati's intention to narrow it down, but I do not think that his method was the most successful one, since it excluded the Bronze Age altogether. Rather, I tend to follow Quinn's approach, who views the Phoenicians as a construct of others, and argues that the people we call 'Phoenician' perceived themselves in an entirely different way and on different levels (Quinn 2018). In this case, it seems clear that as archaeologists, we have constructed an identity for a people, which has then been adopted by museums and disseminated to the world. Now that we have noticed these discrepancies, it is time to disassemble them, starting at the level where they are most immutable: in museums.

Definitions

Levels

At this stage, it seems logical to examine the issue of the definition of Phoenician identity more closely. As we have just seen, the word 'Phoenician' seems to be utilised in many different ways by museums and archaeologists. But how can a single term serve to designate a small settlement in Spain as well as an entire segment of the activity taking place in the Mediterranean in the first millennium BCE? There is clearly a problem of scale here. If a person born in 1180 BC Sidon can be called 'Phoenician', would his grandparents, also born in Sidon a few generations earlier not be Phoenicians as well? Similarly, if a person born in Tyre settled in Sardinia and founded a family there was Phoenician, at what point would his descendants stop being Phoenician? What does being Phoenician mean? Is it just a matter of speaking the language? We know that Aramean was widely spoken in Antiquity, but this does not mean that everyone who used the language was Aramean (Parpola 2004, 9). It would not be heretical to assume that not everyone who spoke and wrote Phoenician thought of themselves as such either. And because there are no attested internal claims to being Phoenician, it is difficult to assign this term to any given level. In other words, it is difficult to assess if we should look for Phoenician identities at the scale of individuals, cities, or the entire Mediterranean. In Homer, 'Phoenician' is used interchangeably with 'Sidonian', but it is not exclusively used for the inhabitants of Sidon by other authors (Winter 2009, 598). According to Quinn (2018), the people we call Phoenicians probably never identified at such a high level. Their group identities were probably limited to family or regional ties. After all, we know that people tended to refer to their mother city in inscriptions, and that the Phoenician cities never were a unified political entity (Perrot and Chipiez 1885, 22; Briquel-Chatonnet 2007, 34).

Therefore, it seems clear that the term 'Phoenician' is too general and irrelevant to use as an identifier for a large group. However, archaeologists continue to use it. Perhaps it is for lack of a better term (arguably one could use Canaanite but this is even more vague), or as a result of the legacy of Hellenocentrism that we insist on a weak appellation. It might also be a simple matter of convenience, also known as scholarly inertia (Bonnet 1995, 649) or because of the attractiveness of a big picture and *longue durée* perspective (despite the fact that the current academic use of the term limits us to the Iron Age). While I am very enthusiastic about taking a global perspective on archaeology and a fervent advocate of understanding things in relation to one another and to the broader system they operated in rather than as isolated artefacts, I think we must be careful about overgeneralization once we start talking about identities. This is why I believe that when dealing with identities, we should move from the individual gradually to larger groups, which is the opposite of what has been done concerning the Phoenicians.

There have been countless studies examining archaeology and identity in recent years, and most of them seem to agree that identity as we define it is composed of a range of markers such as gender, age, ethnicity, religion, social status, etc. (Insoll 2007). Groups identities form around these markers, and therefore a single individual can and usually does adhere to several different groups (Mac Sweeney 2009, 104). Archaeologists have treated the Phoenicians as one such group, but without ever coming to a conclusion as to what the group entails. Obviously, Phoenician is not an age or a gender. It is a language, but it would seem that it is also more than this, at least from the perspective of scholars. Is there a Phoenician religion? This question has been addressed by multiple scholars (Clifford 1990; Brody 1998, etc.) and it is extremely complicated to answer, because Phoenician religion is heavily influenced by older Near Eastern traditions, as well as Egyptian and Hellenistic ones (Rawlinson 1889, 340; Clifford 1990). In addition, religious and burial practices were never uniform throughout what we call the Phoenician world, which seems to indicate that the religious practices varied on local scales (Renan 1864, 206), and did not necessarily follow a centralized cult (Aubet 2001, 151). It is therefore far-fetched to consider Phoenician religion as a component of Phoenician identity. Concerning ethnicity, the question is almost impossible to answer, but if, as seems likely, the Phoenicians were the people living in the central Levant ever since the Bronze Age, and did not suddenly appear from the Persian Gulf at the beginning of the Iron Age (as was previously thought (Rawlinson 1889, 53)), then we cannot talk about a Phoenician ethnicity if we are limiting ourselves to the Iron Age. Even in terms of genetics, similarities do not necessarily mean anything in terms of cultural relations (Quinn 2018, 16), and it might not have been as relevant in the past as it is today (Diaz-Andreu et al. 2005, 109). In summary, Phoenician identity is still an inconclusive idea. Other than language, it does not seem to be formed of any sturdy components.

Because the idea of Phoenician identity was developed on a scale that was too broad and too vague, and because it has no clear definition, it created a myriad of hybrid identities. From Cypro-Phoenician to Phoenicio-Punic, these terms clearly demonstrate that archaeologists do not know where Phoenician culture begins and ends (Bikai 1990). The term 'Punic' is particularly striking in this sense, because 'Punic' is but the latinised version of 'Phoenician' (Moscati 1995, 1). Yet, scholars have used it to refer to the material culture and language that developed in Carthage around the 7th century BCE and spread with the expansion of the city (Ferjaoui 2007, 141). Essentially, we have been trying to nuance the term 'Phoenician' by replacing it with its Latin equivalent, which shows yet again how unclear this label is. Another problematic term that arose from this interpretation of the first millennium BCE Mediterranean is 'Orientalizing'. I will be discussing it in more detail below, but once again it is a testimony to how connected the Mediterranean world must have been, and how archaeology's obsession with classification compromises a more relevant understanding because it makes us jump into the grand scheme of things too quickly. Scholars have been presented with the term 'Phoenician', and before attempting to understand it in local contexts, they have attributed this

identity to a series of artefacts that vaguely felt 'oriental', such as the tridacna shell we started this chapter with. In that sense, Phoenician is an identity of objects rather than an identity of people.

Style and identity

Phoenician archaeology began in 1764 with the decipherment of the Cippus of Malta (Figure 6), which features a bilingual inscription in Phoenician and in Greek (Elayi and Plummer 2018, 2). Ever since its birth, Phoenician archaeology has been tangled with Greece. In many ways, Greeks and Phoenicians should be regarded as part of the same narrative. They were interacting in the Aegean, in Cyprus, and in Sicily, and probably elsewhere in the Mediterranean as well. In fact, Cyprus is quite a good example of the archaeological thirst for categorisation and excessive labelling. In the Iron Age, Cypriot society was a cosmopolitan ensemble formed by people of Greek, Phoenician, and native Cypriot heritage. It is quite likely that most of them were bilingual or trilingual, and that there was surely a lot of interaction and exchange on the island (Sherratt 2003, 234). Yet archaeologists have insisted on dividing Cyprus into a series of Greek, Phoenician or Eteocypriot kingdoms, disregarding for a long time the level of communication between them (Given 1998, 5). For this reason, the question of Phoenician identity on Cyprus is one of the most complex ones I am faced with, and I will come back to it in subsequent chapters.



Figure 6: Cippus of Malta, 2nd century BCE, at the Louvre. Photo author's own.

Another undoing of Phoenician archaeology linked with its entanglement with Greece is the idea of Orientalization, a concept already well established since the 19th century (Gunter 2014, 248). In many ways, Mediterranean and classical archaeology are disciplines descended from art history (Whitley 1987, 15; Trigger 1989, 38). It began as an amateur past-time of collecting, and slowly evolved to become what it is today. What it inherited from art history, especially from the Renaissance, was the conception that Classical Greece was the epitome of artistic and human civilisation (Perrot and Chipiez 1885, 1). Placing Greek art at the centre of everything might seem like an outdated idea nowadays, but it has affected the way in which all Mediterranean archaeology has been shaped and set up an almost immutable framework for the past five centuries. Early archaeologists such as Perrot and Chipiez (1885) clearly assumed that all of the 'primitive' art the Greeks came in contact with led them to develop their own artistic identity, up until the climax of classicism. This idea has two implications. First of all, it meant that non-Greek art and archaeology (especially Near Eastern material) was neglected for a long time and not recorded or analysed as meticulously, because it was considered to be inferior and museums were not as interested in it. This in turn gave rise to the concept of Orientalization. Orientalization is usually defined as the style

adopted in Greece and Italy prior to the classical period, where influence from the Near East starts to appear in the art and material culture of the region (Riva and Vella 2006, 3). The issue with Orientalization is that once again, it is a very vague term that lumps together a myriad of origins and cultures without questioning them. It assumes the existence of a Near Eastern style without going beyond this level and addressing local variations (Gunter 2014, 249). Another problem it triggers is that Orientalizing artefacts from Greece can be extremely different from Orientalizing artefacts from Italy or Spain, but this is a matter beyond the scope of this thesis.

In a way, the idea of a Phoenician style derives from the concept of Orientalizing, in the sense that it was not until very recently that it started to be re-evaluated. In the 19th century, Oriental looking artefacts were collected and Near Eastern sites were generating a growing interest (Vella 2014, 29). At the time, scholars were still able to gain expertise in most civilisations of Antiquity, from Greece and Rome to Mesopotamia and Egypt. Upon encountering some objects such as the tridacna cosmetic container, the ivories, or the metal bowls, the majority of these scholars were puzzled by their 'hybridity' (Rawlinson 1889, 175, 263; Gubel 1995, 509). These artefacts did not adhere to the categories of Mesopotamian, Egyptian, or Greek, and they were found all over the Mediterranean. Thus, Phoenician style was invented, created as a miscellaneous category for artefacts that did not clearly belong to any other one, and this is how it was perceived for as long as it has been studied (Moscati 1968, 43). Of course, this is obviously an overly simplified picture, but when taking the entire assemblage of material labelled as Phoenician and comparing it with each other, we would find many grey areas. Some of this material does indeed look quite similar. The pottery, for example, varies little across different cities (Anderson 1991, 279). In some other cases though, as illustrated by the problem posed by classifying the Nimrud ivories between Syrian and Phoenician, there are more nuances, as some objects have been subject to debate concerning to which group they should belong (Feldman 2014, 31). In other instances, like with sarcophagi (and more generally burial practices), one artefact can be completely different from the next, yet they are still both called 'Phoenician'. In the words of Feldman (2014, 179): "Although the historical inaccuracy of the term Phoenician with respect to a political entity has been remarked on repeatedly in scholarship, the use of it as a stylistic designation continues mostly unchallenged."

Style is difficult to define, especially when working with a range of different materials, and having to take into consideration the existence of other materials which have decomposed. The idea of style is also quite variable. It could be the individual signature of a craftsman, or a certain fashion which transcends cultural boundaries, or the result of a consciously imposed method or technique; and it is often an array of contradictory components (Hodder 1990, 44). Talking about Phoenician style, we always assume that it is an arrangement of techniques, skill sets, and exposure to different backgrounds which creates this eclectic signature (Hussein 2014, 125). Except we cannot really speak of signature when artefacts are not instantly recognizable; and with the exception of inscribed objects,

it is difficult even for the trained eye to instantly recognize an object as Phoenician the way one would recognize a Greek vase. Therefore, questions about Phoenician identity are as relevant today as they were in the 19th century because of the elusivity of this style (Fontan 2007, 17).

Phoenician style has in turn been used to ascribe a Phoenician identity to objects, tying two flimsy concepts together. On the one hand, we have a mushy idea of who the Phoenicians actually were and how they thought of themselves and related to one another. On the other, we have a no man's land of labelling, regrouping almost random artefacts in the face of other more clear-cut categories. It felt convenient to combine this to reach an even vaguer definition of Phoenician culture. They were the people who occupied the central Levantine coast during the Iron Age and established colonies in the Mediterranean, in search of raw materials to practice their skilful craftsmanship in things as varied as ivory carving, purple dye, and glass blowing. In the next chapter, we will see again how this definition has been fed by literary stereotypes. However, if we look closely, Phoenician culture seems to actually be a non-culture and an identity of exclusion (Anico and Peralta 2009, 1). Being Phoenician does not mean anything other than not being Egyptian or not being Greek. It does not imply anything else, but it is charged with impositions from the outside which started with Homer in the 9th century and are perpetuated in museums to this day.

Summary: Deconstructing displays

This chapter is the starting point for my research. In it, I have addressed questions of interpretation and definition, from archaeological concepts to experiences of exhibited artefacts. I started with individual objects, discussing how every single object acts as a first encounter with a culture, and can generate a multitude of perceptions, making it impossible to achieve universal consensus. In addition, the context of the museum itself and the guidelines it follows also affect the different interpretations of artefacts. Many recent studies have discussed the role of the museum and its place in representing cultures, showing that the relationships between the makers and users of objects and the artefacts themselves often differed from the museum interpretations of these artefacts. Most of these studies have been centred on ethnography rather than archaeology and have shown that museums are trying to become more inclusive with their ethnographic collections (Catalani 2009). However, archaeological collections have often been showcased in the same way for decades, without questioning the idea that the labels they use might not have applied in the past (Kiely 2018, pers. comm.). Admittedly, it is much more complicated to understand what objects meant to people they have outlived by millennia, but the consequence of this should not be a static imposition of labels.

Labels were the focus of the second part of this chapter, in which I argue that they are a very simplified package of information, forcing out much of the history of artefacts. Often, this is due to space and design constraints. However, I believe that the museum should be at the service of the object rather than the opposite, which seems to be too often the case. Museum labels are extremely important in

that they constitute the bulk of the information for the largest amount of people interacting with the artefacts, and they are almost invariably taken at face value. It is therefore a complex task to vulgarise and summarise intricate archaeological data to reach a concise but powerful result. At the level of archaeology, the label 'Phoenician' needs to be questioned as well. It is an appellation that has been imposed by outsiders and archaeologists, and which is not truly representative of the group of people it means to designate. It is also quite likely that this group was not as homogenous as we believe.

One of the problems that the concept of Phoenician identity poses is the level at which it should be measured. Archaeologists and museums use it as a vague term, with variable definitions, because no scale of it feels like a true match. In some ways, Phoenician feels like a designation applied more easily to artefacts than people. The idea of a Phoenician style was created to categorise some material which did not seem to adhere to other well-delineated cultural contexts, obliterating the idea of interconnectedness and exchange in the first millennium BCE Mediterranean. In fact, the individual experiences of people across the Mediterranean at the time must have been heavily influenced by this unprecedented interconnectedness and cosmopolitanism (Aruz 2014, 11). Thus, I am not denying the existence of the Phoenicians as people, but I am trying to reconsider their definition as a people who produced a specific recognizable type of objects. Phoenician style, just like Phoenician identity, is not comprehensive of clear characteristics and codes that would make it distinguishable the way gothic or mid-century modern are defined styles. Rather, it is a construction made to fit a system where territories are limited and people and objects can only belong in certain boxes (or more situationally, showcases). It seems like it is time to reconsider the way we think as archaeologists. My aim in this project is not to reinvent the wheel (or glass blowing), but to understand how the different perceptions of the Phoenicians that exist today came into being, as a contribution to a deeper shift in archaeology and museum studies.

When perceiving an object in a museum, we perceive it through a series of filters. Archaeology is one such filter (Boytner et al. 2010, 14), museum interpretations and contexts are another, and our own experience is a third one. Human choices and circumstances therefore dictate how we perceive artefacts, and by extension cultures. The existence of an artefact implies the existence of an infinite number of possible perceptions and interpretations, and therefore, there can be no attempts at attaining objectivity, neither from archaeologists nor from museums. The quest for Historical Truth is an impossible one. Therefore, in this project, I will not try to redefine or reinvent the Phoenicians, and I will not suggest new methods or theories. Rather, what I am trying to achieve is an overview of how the choices we have made and the circumstances we have been imposed have affected our perceptions of the Phoenicians, particularly in museum contexts since it is there that we encounter them the most. To quote Meskell (1998, 4): "The past is not a static, archaic residue, rather it is an inherited artefact which has an active influence in the present through the interplay of popular and officially inscribed meanings." I have worked my way backwards in this chapter, just like archaeology

works backward from the most recent contexts to the oldest ones. Walking backwards implies a limited view, and therefore a patchy picture, which seems to be what we have with the Phoenicians.

Chapter 2 | The Eye of the Beholder: Perceptions and Attitudes to the Phoenicians in the Literature

"The history of the Phoenician states has been treated too much from a polemical point of view." (Kenrick 1855, 453)

Introduction

The above quote is extracted from one of the oldest academic volumes dealing with Phoenicia (Rawlison 1889, vii). It is significant that at such an early stage in the history of Phoenician studies, this issue should already be raised. Kenrick does not specify what exactly he is referring to, but I believe it has to do with the perceptions of the Phoenicians in the ancient sources, as well as how Phoenician identity has been appropriated and used in different nationalistic contexts since the 16th century at least, down to his own experience of British nationalism at the time.

Somehow, this quote is even more relevant today than it was almost 200 years ago, and we will see in this chapter how Phoenician identity has been constructed and deconstructed in a multiplicity of contexts, starting with the ancient sources and leading to contemporary pop culture. It will examine academic coverage, but also national ideologies in order to understand the plasticity of Phoenician identity, which is fundamental to larger issues of heritage and mediation I will be tackling later in this work.

Classical sources and conflicting agendas

The sources

Primary literary sources from the Phoenician world are scarce and scattered. The sarcophagus of Eshmunazar II, discovered in 1855, remains to this day the second longest Phoenician inscription ever found with its twenty-two lines (Vance 1994, 11)[2]. The inscription speaks of the deceased king, his genealogy, the deeds he accomplished during his lifetime, and also features a curse directed towards anyone who might disturb the tomb (Haelewyck 2012, 80). The vast majority of the other inscriptions (some 10,000 of them) are also mainly dedicatory or funerary in nature (Mazza 1988, 628). It is quite safe to assume, however, that the Phoenicians did not use their celebrated alphabet for the sole purpose of praising their gods and their dead (Lopez-Ruiz 2019, 157). In fact, the success of the alphabet was largely due to the fact that it was much more suitable than some other systems to write on papyrus. Due to the humid conditions of the Mediterranean, this medium has not survived, and we are therefore left only with inscriptions made on more durable material, namely stone and some pottery (Markoe 2000, 110).

[2] The longest one being a bilingual Phoenician-Luwian inscription from Karatepe which remains on the site and was therefore not included in this study.

And while this corpus of inscriptions has proven quite informative in terms of onomastics, dynastics, epigraphy, and up to some point religious and funerary customs, most scholars have regretted the absence of historical or at least administrative documents (Elayi 1982, 83; Rollig 1995, 211). In fact, as early as 1885, Perrot and Chipiez (1885, 57) express a clear consciousness that the sources are fairly limited and cannot be taken for granted. The existence of such administrative documents is attested by external sources. The Assyrian sources, the Bible, and the historian Josephus all mention the existence of annals kept by the city of Tyre (Aubet 2001, 27). Through Eusebius, we also know of a literary source mainly dedicated to Phoenician religion written by Sanchuniathon, a Phoenician priest, and translated to Greek by Philo of Byblos in the first century AD (Aubet 2001, 28). This second level of Phoenician literature has been transmitted across space, time, and cultures, and although it offers different insights than the stones inscriptions, it remains a brittle source.

As a consequence of these conditions, historians of Phoenicia are left with external sources to turn to. Contemporary to the Phoenicians are the Egyptian and Assyrian texts, which have been useful for reconstructions of the socio-political structure of the Phoenicians city-states. The Bible is another source that could be considered contemporary, but as it has been compiled a little later and has gone through a series of transmissions, it has to be considered more carefully than the two aforementioned sources. The Homeric epics, which also extensively mention the Phoenicians, are once again taking us back to this problem of transmission of oral traditions into written text. Finally, the classical authors, both Greek and Roman, such as Strabo, Pliny, Herodotus, Josephus, Thucydides, and Polybius (among many others) have been main sources for the study of Phoenician history ever since its inception in the 19th century. Rather than focusing on the pure information provided by them, I will be considering different attitudes to the Phoenicians in these sources in the following paragraphs.

The perspectives

The oldest sources concerned with Phoenicia are the Egyptian ones. In fact, most of them date back earlier than 1200 BCE, and while they are unremarkable in terms of attitudes to the inhabitants of the region, they testify to continuity and well-established traditions in the city-states of the central Levantine coast (Killebrew 2019, 42). The Assyrian sources are not much more useful in their perceptions of the Phoenicians, and I will therefore not dwell on them here either.

When it comes to the Bible, however, the picture is quite different. We know from the Bible that the Israelite kings had collaborative, if not friendly, relations with the Phoenician kings. They traded in agricultural products, manufactured goods, and skilled workforce; as illustrated by the example of Hiram of Tyre's involvement in the construction of the temple of Solomon in Jerusalem (Aubet 2001, 44). Despite such cordial partnerships, many passages from the Bible refer to the Phoenicians (or more generally the Canaanites) in a rather degrading fashion. It violently condemns many of the 'barbaric' practices reportedly performed by the Phoenicians, the most notorious one of course being child

sacrifice[3]. We will be going back to these dynamics in a moment, but let us first continue our overview of the sources.

The Homeric epics echo the conflicting perceptions from the Bible. While they do not openly depict the Phoenicians as such a horrendous population, they do paint them as mischievous and opportunistic crooks and slavers. At the same time, the Iliad and the Odyssey agree with the Biblical authors when it comes to recognizing the value of Phoenician craftsmanship and the skill of its people in all matters of industry and commerce (Winter 2009, 639).

The classical authors emphasize this aspect even more. They attribute the invention of navigation altogether to the Phoenicians, even though it is archaeologically attested in the Mediterranean from the Bronze Age at least (Bikai 1990, 70). Something else the Phoenicians receive praise from the classical authors for is the alphabet (Rollig 1995, 193). Finally, many of the classical authors credit the Carthaginians for their practically unrivalled skill in war. In all other aspects, the Phoenicians are once more presented as a barbaric, decadent population, the extreme opposite of the orderly Roman Empire (Ribichini 1995, 77).

The context(s)

In summary, the Phoenician were associated strongly with certain characteristics by most of the sources that mention them. It is important to consider the rationale behind these perceptions, as the picture painted by the ancient sources has been taken up by academia and pop culture alike, to the point of creating preeminent stereotypes about the Phoenicians.

As mentioned in the first part of this chapter, the Egyptian and Assyrian sources do not participate in the diffusion of the decadent image of the Phoenicians. While this may seem trivial, it is actually quite a significant point to consider. There is no lack of textual evidence for both these cultures, and therefore this neutrality towards the Phoenicians cannot be denied by an argument from silence. Let us also point out that the Egyptians and the Assyrians were the populations who interacted most closely with the Phoenicians, which means that of all the aforementioned sources, they can arguably be considered to be the most reliable ones. I believe that the objectivity encountered towards the Phoenicians in both these sources is due to two factors. First of all, there is the nature of the texts themselves. The Assyrian sources in particular consist of administrative documents. They do not target a large audience, as for example the Bible does. Therefore, they do not need to particularly dwell on any specific characteristics of the populations they interacted with. The other reason that could explain this neutrality is the relatively non-conflictual relations between the empires of Egypt and Assyria and the Phoenician city-states. Neither the Assyrians nor the Egyptians ever saw the Phoenicians as a threat, which can explain why they did not feel the need to expand on them in their

[3] But let us not forget that the word tophet itself comes from a place name near Jerusalem

writings. The *Story of Wenamun*, an Egyptian text dating from the 11th century BCE, reports the eventful trip and visit of an Egyptian official to Byblos. In the story, Wenamun is not received with the greatest hospitality, and suffers a series of unfortunate events. However, the Phoenicians are still not labelled with generic negative characteristics, and the story retains a relative neutral tone. In fact, most scholars have used the material from the *Story of Wenamun* to study the political relations between Egypt and Phoenicia at the time rather than to try defining Phoenician identity based on it (Liverani 2001; Sass 2002).

The same cannot be said from the Bible. While it is true that the biblical populations also closely interacted with the Phoenicians, unlike the Assyrian and Egyptian sources, the Biblical texts were not all compiled at the same time (Wegner 2004, 27). This inevitably resulted in distortions and contributed to a plurality of interpretations. This factor alone though does not suffice to explain the way in which the Phoenicians are depicted in the Bible. If the Egyptians and the Assyrians did not bother with condemning their practices, why was it so important for the Biblical authors? Considering the seemingly close-knit relations between the populations of Phoenicia and those of Palestine at the time, as well as the fact that they shared certain aspects of their material culture but also socio-cultural traditions, it seems almost hypocritical to see the Phoenicians perceived so negatively in the Bible. In order to explain this phenomenon, we must go back to the essential nature of the Bible: it is a religious text. Although it also holds value as a historical document, its primary aim was to instore and diffuse a completely new belief system, and by the time it was compiled, the system was already well established. It comes as no surprise, therefore, that it should depict any population with different beliefs as savage, barbaric, and unholy. For the Biblical authors, the industrial skills of the Phoenicians and their religious practices did not affect one another (Doak 2019). The Phoenicians were perceived as great craftsmen who also happened to practice horrible rituals such as sacred prostitution and child sacrifice. In sum, they were recognized for the former, but more importantly condemned for the latter. They were seen as a mixture of useful neighbours and blasphemous enemies to monotheistic religion in its early days, and this perception stems from propagandistic motives. As Kenrick (1855, 278) puts it: “Even amidst the reproaches which the Jewish prophets address to the Phoenicians for their selfish policy and unjust commercial dealings, we see proofs of the high rank which they held for intelligence and culture among the surrounding nations.”

The Homeric epics present a similar problem of oral traditions being compiled into text. This issue is most obvious when considering the lack of consistency in the appellation of the Phoenicians, who are sometimes referred to as such and sometimes referred to as Sidonians (Aubet 2001, 9). With the Homeric epics, we are also moving further away from the core of the Phoenician network, which also partially explains this gap in designation. The Greeks who interacted with the Phoenicians at the time of the Homeric epics encountered a portion of foreign navigators trading in the Aegean. Arguably these were actually Phoenician sailors, but as has been demonstrated by earlier shipwrecks, crews

were often multicultural, and it may well be that the 'Phoenicians' Homer refers to are actually a much more mixed population originating from all of the Eastern Mediterranean (Sherratt 2010, 124; Aruz et. Al 2013; Harpster 2017, 59). This in itself is problematic when we consider that many of the stereotypes about the Phoenicians are inherited from the Homeric epics, and these are likely to be stemming from perceptions of a Greek 'other' (Winter 2009, 636).

However, as most subsequent authors have taken the word Phoenician in its literal sense, we need to do so as well in order to understand how the Homeric perceptions have affected later ones (Sherratt 2010, 126). As with the Bible, the Phoenicians are perceived as extremely skilled craftsmen in the Homeric epics, but unlike the biblical texts, the Homeric ones do not condemn Phoenician religion (Winter 2009, 604; Morris 2011, 611). This can be explained by the fact that Greek and Phoenician religion were rather similar and in fact became quite intertwined in the Late Iron Age and the Hellenistic period (Quinn 2018). The characteristic that comes into play here though is that aside from being legendary craftsmen, and perhaps because they were talented merchants, the Phoenicians were also depicted as crooks. They are seen by Homer as a generally opportunistic population who took advantage of every one that did business with them. To explain this, we need to go back once again to the fact that the Greeks only interacted with this one segment of the population that actually did trade in the Aegean (Sherratt 2010). Therefore, this idea of a mercantile population probably became generalized because it was the only aspect the Greeks interacted with. On the other hand, the Greeks were commercial rivals of the Phoenicians (Sherratt and Sherratt 1993, 369). Therefore, painting them as a population only interested in making profit helped putting the Greeks in better light. As the Homeric epics cannot be considered propaganda properly speaking, it may very well be that this image formed itself almost subconsciously in the traditions that constituted it, as a reaction to otherness in a context of comparable ground (in this case, maritime trade) (Skinner 2012, 89).

Furthest away in terms of interaction stand the classical authors, the most relevant ones for the study of the Phoenicians including Josephus, Eusebius, Herodotus, Polybius, Thucydides, Porphyry, and Diodorus Siculus to cite a few (Quinn 2019; Schmitz 2019). Interestingly, they are the ones who mention the Phoenicians most extensively. In their perceptions we find a mixture of most of the aforementioned attitudes. The Phoenicians are given a lot of credit for their craftsmanship once again, as well as for the invention of the alphabet. But most importantly, they are especially praised for their skills in navigation. At the same time, they are once again berated for their decadence and their barbarism. All the elements previously discussed can be traced back here, starting with propaganda. The Carthaginians were a problematic element for the Romans, having defeated them on more than one occasion. The reaction to this was to distinguish themselves from the savage nature of the Phoenicians but praise their maritime skills because it justified Roman defeats. They were beaten by a savage, almost animalistic population, reflected in their destructive warfare. On the other hand, we can sense a sort of fearful admiration for the Phoenicians both in the works of Greek and Roman

authors. Certainly, some Greek authors felt redeemable to them because of the transmission of the alphabet. The Roman perspective might be linked to this as well, but I believe that the admiration from the part of the Roman authors also comes from the fact that the Phoenicians were seen as the first unifiers of the Mediterranean, having established colonies on all its shores and beyond, and that this feat was greatly admired by the later inhabitants of the *mare nostrum*.

To conclude, there seem to be many conflicting images of the Phoenicians in the different sources where they are mentioned. To simplify them very crudely, the Phoenicians were seen as talented craftsmen and traders, with excellent maritime navigational skills. However, they were also perceived as opportunistic barbarians with savage practices. It would seem that the further away we move in time and space, the more emphasized these stereotypes become. In contemporary Egyptian and Assyrian sources, there is hardly any mention of specific characteristics associated with the Phoenicians, but by the time we get to the classical authors, the picture mentioned above is fully formed.

Imperialism and European Nationalism in the 19th century

Let us now take a step forward in time to 19th-century Europe. Before we start discussing attitudes to the Phoenicians in this period, it is crucial to note that the classical sources were extensively studied back then, and that the scholars writing at the time had arguably the best knowledge of these sources. Another thing to keep in mind is the state of archaeology in the Mediterranean. Prior to Renan's *Mission de Phénicie* in 1860, most of the archaeological knowledge of the Phoenician world consisted of chance finds gathered by amateurs or bought on the antiquities market, often lacking context. Consequently, the classical authors were the main sources for the study of this culture. Their views have therefore undoubtedly influenced early scholars of Phoenicia, such as Rawlinson, Renan, Perrot and Chipiez, and Kenrick, and we shall examine these repercussions in the following paragraphs.

Britain and Ireland

I will begin with Britain and Ireland. At the dawn of the 19th century, most nations were becoming increasingly interested in their origins, but both Britain and Ireland had been starting to associate with the Phoenicians, a concept still hazily defined, since the 16th century (Quinn 2018). In Ireland, two origin claims were attested by politicians and authors (Quinn 208, 197). The first one advocated descendance from the Greeks, and the second actually tried to relate the Irish to the Phoenicians. The rationale behind this was fuelled by a linguistic study attempting to link Gaelic language to Phoenician (Champion 2001, 455). This identification is significant because the Irish were usually depicted as savages, the complete opposite of the civilised English (Quinn 2018, 177). Claims of descendance either from the Greeks or from the Phoenicians meant that they could now challenge this image by associating themselves with two of the oldest civilisations in the world. However, these theories were

soon challenged, and it became clear that it was highly unlikely that the Irish were descended from the Phoenicians (Champion 2001, 456).
At the same time, Britain was also claiming inheritance from the Phoenicians. Early on, it was believed that the Phoenicians reached the coast of Cornwall and 'civilised' the native inhabitants of England. "In the ensuing debate, it was suggested that the Phoenicians had been responsible not only for clotted cream, but also for the use of saffron in cakes in Cornwall" (Champion 2001, 461). This 'evidence' was linked to the finding of an ingot very similar to the ones famously traded by the Phoenicians, but which soon turned out to be medieval (Champion 2001, 459). However, this did not slow down Britain's identification with Phoenicia. It simply changed its nature.

The Phoenicians as role-models

In fact, rather than claiming genetic relations to the Phoenicians, the British were now seeing them as role models. Their attitude to the Phoenicians was indeed quite favourable, and perhaps even enthusiastic (Bernal 1987, 337). In its imperial ideology, Great Britain was drawing parallels between its naval and industrial expansion and that of the Phoenicians (Champion 2001, 456). The English saw themselves almost as spiritual descendants from the Phoenicians, whom Rawlison called "the great pioneers of civilization" (1889, 552). The Phoenicians were perceived as peaceful traders who 'civilised' the rest of the Mediterranean (and by extension, the world) without having to wage wars the way the Romans did. Quoting Rawlinson (1889, 554) again: "If the history of the world since their time has not been wholly one of the potency in human affairs of "blood and iron," it is very much owing to them."



Figure 7: Coin from Tyre showing the myth of Kadmos, 3rd century CE. © Bibliothèque nationale de France.

This was a convenient analogy to draw with the then expanding British Empire, given that the British also saw themselves as merchants, linking a variety of networks together. Adding to this commercial venture, 19th century Great Britain also very much perceived itself as a benefactory civilising enterprise. The Phoenicians sailed across the Mediterranean not only to gain access to resources and enrich themselves, but, more importantly, to bring the greatest gift to the 'primitive' natives: civilisation. This was symbolized by the myth of Kadmos, a Phoenician prince offering the alphabet to the Greeks (Figure 7). This aspect of the identity of the Phoenicians was especially important to imperial Britain because through this parallel, it could justify its colonising movement. In fact, this identification was so strong that it made it to national British iconography, as illustrated by Leighton's painting Phoenicians trading with Ancient Britons on the coast of Cornwall in the Royal Exchange (Figure 8). There was also a proposal for a series of paintings, one of which was a comparison of

Phoenicians on the coast of Cornwall with Captain Cook in Tahiti (Champion 2001, 457). These examples illustrate how highly regarded the Phoenicians were in 19th-century Britain. In academia, these views were most notably championed by Rawlinson, who openly compared the British to the Phoenicians. The inheritance of stereotypes from the classical sources is echoed in the idea of transmission of civilisation. It is acknowledged in all the 19th century volumes on the Phoenicians, even those who also took up the more negative stereotypes, because of the heavy reliance on classical sources at the time and because of the importance the classical sources give to the Phoenicians in those terms of transmission of the alphabet and invention of navigation.

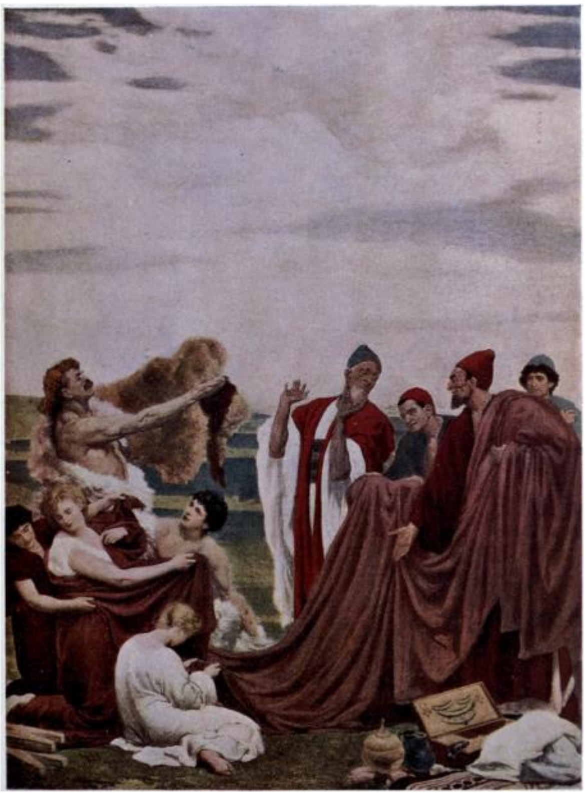


Figure 8: Phoenicians trading with Ancient Britons on the coast of Cornwall, Leighton, 1894. Public domain.

Downfall of British appropriation

However, this enthusiasm was to dwindle and decrease. The British identification with the Phoenicians was the source of some contradictions. First of all, there was the fact that the British, with their imperialist ideology, also sometimes compared themselves to the Romans, whom they viewed as having civilised the primitive British populations, having more solid evidence of Roman settlements in Britain in comparison with Phoenician ones. With the Romans being well-known enemies of the Carthaginians, this was a rather uncomfortable oxymoron (Champion 2001, 460). Another factor that contributed to the decline of appropriation the Phoenicians in Britain was the interlinked rise of Romanticism, Orientalism, and Anti-Semitism. This was partially reflected in the aversion towards Phoenician religion, which was perceived as barbaric, and this did not exactly suit the political interests of Britain (Champion 2001, 460). These contradictions contributed to the decline of Britain's association with the Phoenicians, alongside new archaeological studies in British prehistory where the native inhabitants of England started to be perceived under a more flattering light (Champion 2001, 462).

Romanticism, Orientalism, and the Hellenocentric perspective

Anti-Semitism in Europe

Early studies of Phoenicia were compromised in their objectivity because of several factors such as political interest (as illustrated by the British case), increased contacts with the local populations, and rising anti-Semitism (Liverani 1998, 6). However much anti-Semitism may have contributed to the depreciation of the Phoenicians in Britain, it had a significantly higher impact in continental Europe (Bernal 1987, 337). Phoenician was already a deciphered language, and it was evident that it was very closely related to Hebrew. Moreover, Jews were also a population with a strong history of trading and commerce, which also worked in favour of their being associated with the Phoenicians. Let us stress once again that the main sources for the study of the Phoenicians at the time were the classical authors and Homer. Taking the perceptions of the Phoenicians in these sources and applying them to their own experience of Jews, Europeans therefore amplified the Phoenician/Semitic stereotypes. Particularly emphasised were notions of an 'other' different, uncivilised barbaric, opportunistic, and corrupted population. In this attitude, the Phoenicians became merged with the Jews and the anti-Semitic atmosphere meant that they were widely disregarded or rather misregarded, as I will show in a moment (Garnard 2019). In fact, according to Bernal, the decline of anti-Semitism and the aftermath of World War II played a major role later on in the re-establishment of Phoenician studies (Bernal 1987, 400). Before we move on though, it is important to remember that the Phoenicians were heavily condemned in the Bible, and that Jews themselves never identified with them. Moreover, Bernal's historiography does not take into consideration the very important and condescending role played by later Biblical archaeology and its effect on perceptions of the Phoenicians (Bikai 1990). The anti-Semitic attitudes are therefore a reflection of the Eurocentrist model that prevailed on most of the perceptions of the Phoenicians for a long time in the 19th and early 20st centuries (Garnard 2002, 4).

Romanticism and Orientalism

In addition to the socio-political situation, the Eurocentrist views were also driven by the cultural currents of the time. First of all, Romanticism was very much in fashion until at least the middle of the 19th century, and I believe it has influenced scholarship in general, and perceptions of the Phoenicians in particular. To put things back in context, the academic world was much narrower at the time than it is now, and it is clear that most scholars knew each other, or at least they knew of each other (Vella 2013). This also meant that the various disciplines were more connected to each other, and again it is obvious in early archaeological texts that these were influenced by the natural sciences as well as art history and literature. This crossover is particularly striking in Perrot and Chipiez's *History of Art in Phoenicia and its Dependencies* (1885). The volume analyses objects that were believed to be Phoenician, in both a very descriptive art-historical and evolutionary manner. This is not the earliest academic book on the Phoenicians, but a lot of the ideas expressed in it can also be found in previous volumes

such as Rawlinson's *History of Phoenicia* (1889), Kenrick's *Phoenicia* (1855), Movers' *Die Phonizer* (1851), and Renan's *Mission de Phénicie* (1864). Although Romanticism is an artistic and literary movement, it has had an impact on the perceptions of all the aforementioned authors. Romanticism was also particularly well-suited to anti-Semitic views because it placed central importance on northern white cultures, praising highland landscapes and snowy mountains. What Bernal calls 'the Aryan model' is very much linked to this idea of northern Indo-European origins, and henceforth a complete denial of any attachment to Semitic populations. At the same time, grand tours had been taking place for almost a century, and people were becoming increasingly interested in ruins. More and more missions and excavations started to take place in the Mediterranean, and soon enough, the Near East. The large majority of these archaeological missions were launched by colonial powers (Porter 2016, 51). Local populations were barely involved, or when they were it was only as traders in the antiquities market. Some authors (notably Renan (1864)) claim that the locals were not interested in the scientific aspect of the digs and only sought out the profit they could make out of the antiquities, but it might very well be that the European nations took care of purposefully not engaging the local communities in order to suit their own interests and that of their museums.

Here, another crucial concept comes into play: Orientalism. Orientalism is a term coined by Edward Said in his eponymous volume of 1978. The definitions of it are too complex and extensive for me to detail them here, but in its essence, Orientalism is a Western construct of ideas about the East, in which the West has always been placed in a position of advantage (Said 1979). Orientalism is linked to colonialism in the sense that it plays on the belief that Oriental populations cannot gain a proper understanding of themselves, their history, and culture outside of the European framework (Bernal



Figure 9: Collectible card from the brand Liebig. Public domain.

1983, 236). In a way, the West needs the East to define itself against it, the way the Greeks defined themselves in the face of the Phoenician 'other'. The ancient Greeks themselves were probably Orientalists. Phoenician research has a long history of being divided between the Eastern and the Western Mediterranean, which in itself could be a form of Orientalism. Orientalism is not exclusive to any one discipline. In fact, it is not even exclusive to academia itself. Orientalism is present in popular culture as well, examples of which include countless movies, comic books, advertisements etc… For instance, Figure 9 is a collectible card from a Belgian brand of packaged meat, dating from the early 1900s. It depicts the Phoenicians trading on the coast of Carthage and re-emphasises the commercial stereotype.

Salammbô

One major Orientalist work that has greatly affected the perceptions of the Phoenicians is *Salammbô* by Flaubert (Figure 10). This 1862 novel tells the story of a young Carthaginian princess and her involvement in the intrigues of the mercenaries' revolt of 240-238 BCE. Although Flaubert is classified as a realist in terms of literary currents, his work clearly shows influences of Romanticism and Orientalism. Romanticism and Orientalism relate to each other closely because the former informs the latter. The Western perspective on the Orient, as reflected in *Salammbô*, comes in contrast to the northern imagery so prized by the Romantics. Opposite rich forests and mighty mountains are the luscious tropical gardens of Megara and the stuffing heat of the African desert. Opposite the civilized, polite Europeans are the barbaric, decadent Carthaginians with their sacred prostitution and child sacrifice. Although these contrasts are not explicitly expressed in the novel, which is centred in one place and on one people (plus mercenaries of various origins, all also very much associated with many stereotypes), they are definitely implied. Flaubert invested a considerable amount of research in the construction of the volume. He undoubtedly read the classical authors, and even visited the ruins of Carthage (Jay 1972, 33; Green and Green 1982, 31). However, *Salammbô* was initially not well-received, which is interesting given the impact it had on all subsequent perceptions of the Phoenicians. The literary community dismissed the book as being an incomprehensible archaeological treatise, and the academic community considered it a pure work of fiction (notes in Flaubert 1862). This did not prevent scholars from being heavily influenced by the book. Arguably, Flaubert's greatest literary strength is how vividly he is able to depict sceneries and events. *Salammbô*



Figure 10: Cover art of Salammbô by Mucha. Public domain.

was written before most academic books on the Phoenicians, but if someone who did not know this read it after having read academic monographs by Rawlinson, Renan, or even Moscati who wrote in two volumes in 1968 and 1988 and was a pioneer in modern Phoenician archaeology, they could think that Flaubert had been able to access these sources before publishing his novel. In fact, it is the reverse phenomenon that happened. The visuals in *Salammbô* are so strong that it is almost impossible to detach oneself from them, especially given that in a lot of instances archaeology is written in a narrative way. I do not think I need to stress more on how problematic it is that a fictional novel, no matter how thoroughly researched, has shaped the perceptions of the vast majority of scholars of Phoenician archaeology.

France and the Phoenicians

As illustrated by both Flaubert and Renan, the attitudes of the French towards the Phoenicians are particularly interesting. Renan's mission was undertaken as part of one of Napoleon's military campaigns to the Middle East. It was not infrequent in the 19th century for archaeology to be connected to military or espionage activities (Richter 2008). In the Napoleonic era though, this took up a much larger aspect in Mediterranean archaeology. The French identified their empire with the Roman Empire and perceived it as a revival of it (Davis 2007). This came in contrast to the British identification with the Phoenicians mentioned earlier; and illustrates the historic rivalry between the French and the British, echoed in their respective appropriations of Roman and Phoenician identities. In perceiving themselves as a renewed form of the Roman Empire, the French had in mind to conquer the whole of the Mediterranean. Archaeology comes into play here because it was used to relate modern populations to ancient ones, and hence associate the populations France was colonising to those that had been conquered by the Romans. Naturally, the people of Lebanon became linked to the Phoenicians, and by extension with all the pejorative qualities associated with them, stemming as we have just seen from classical and biblical perceptions, romanticism, orientalism, and the anti-Semitic climate. This is especially clear in Renan's volume, where the locals are depicted as having no interest whatsoever for science, the higher arts, or any form of culture (Renan 1864,2). According to him, the Semites were a hopeless case, a good for nothing people, the same as their barbaric ancestors. In Perrot and Chipiez, it is also clear that the Phoenicians were perceived as very poor artists with little imagination, who did not understand the symbolism of the motifs they were borrowing from their neighbours (Perrot and Chipiez 1885, 333). Obviously, all these perceptions are very Eurocentric and evolutionary, and clearly reflect the ideology that only the Greeks achieved a perfect level of civilisation, and then transmitted it to the Romans and the rest of Europe.

No matter how dismissed the Phoenicians were though, most scholars could not completely deny their influence in the ancient world, even when taking an evolutionary perspective which had classical Greece at its climax. This is clear in Rawlinson, for example, who considers that the Phoenicians lay

the foundations for the Greeks to take up, and that the latter would never have achieved such a level of ideal civilisation were it not for the Phoenicians (Rawlinson 1889, 58). The fact that the Phoenicians functioned in a system of city-states rather than empires also brought them closer to the Greeks in the minds of Europeans, and therefore favoured this idea (Liverani 1998, 11). This is also reflected in the perspectives of some French authors such as Sainte-Croix, Raynal, and Diderot as early as the 18th century (Earley 2016,13) and later on with Renan and Autran. The difference here though is that the French authors, while acknowledging the Phoenicians' contribution, still denied their Semitic origins. This is because they considered that they were almost too evolved to be Semitic, a contrast that is clear in Renan who opposes the current barbaric populations to their civilised ancestors. He marks a clear distinction between the Phoenicians and the Canaanites, calling the latter "uncivilized and primitive" (Renan 1864, 606). In the early 20th century, some scholars such as Autran joined him in advocating a non-Semitic identity for the Phoenicians (Liverani 1998, 14).

Phoenicianism

These perceptions have undoubtedly contributed to the rise of Phoenicianism, a political movement founded in Lebanon in the 1920s. The founders of Phoenicianism were young, French-speaking Maronite Christian entrepreneurs, the majority of whom were educated at the Jesuit Université Saint Joseph. The Jesuits played a major role in the ties with France and the subsequent establishment of Phoenicianism (Kaufman 2001, 173). One could trace back the idea of Phoenician heritage in the modern population of Lebanon in the writings of clergymen in the 19th century, with the earliest association attested in the writings of Tannus Al-Shidiaq in 1859 (Quinn 2018, 4). Some of these authors were heavily influenced by the French researchers and adopted the views that the Phoenicians were early pioneers of civilisation. In fact, Renan reports that some Maronite populations he encountered in the region of Byblos were "shocked" to learn there were non-Christian populations established in the region before them (Renan 1964, 217). These ideas were initially more popular within the Lebanese diaspora, helped by foreign perceptions. For example, the Lebanese US immigrants were called "Christian descendants of the Phoenicians" in 1911 (Quinn 2018, 4). However, it is not until the creation of Phoenicianism that the Phoenician identity was used in adversity to Arab identity. The 1920s witnessed the early days of pan-arabism, and Phoenicianism was initially a political reaction to this climate. Phoenicianists claimed that they were descended directly from the Phoenicians (who had converted to Christianity as soon as the opportunity presented itself to them), and therefore met the French ideology denying a Semitic origin, both for themselves and for their ancestors. Phoenicianists such as Al-Saouda referred to Lebanon as 'the cradle of civilisation' and contributed to the separation of Lebanon from Syria by claiming this distinct heritage (Kaufman 2001, 181; Quinn 2018, 7).

However much the founders of Phoenicianism were influenced by Maronite priests and French scholars, they were neither academics nor religious men. For the most part, they were businessmen,

and they especially recognised themselves in this cliché of Phoenician culture. They saw the Phoenicians as "above all men of the sea, sailing as far as Great Britain, liberal, peaceful; bringing the world civilization, commerce, and industry" (Quinn 2017, 7). Coincidentally, this view is actually very close to the British perspective, with the subtle difference that the British saw the Phoenicians more as role-models while Phoenicianists considered them to be their genetic ancestors. In the mercantile sense though, the rationale was the same. Phoenicianists considered trade to be a skill engraved in their genes, transmitted to them by their celebrated ancestors. They also saw themselves in the maritime aspect of the Phoenicians, connecting three continents and an entire sea together, all thanks to their skill in crafts and commerce. Interestingly, this view seems to ignore much of the more negative characteristics associated with the Phoenician traders in the ancient sources, as it is often the case with nationalism, local memory is selective. Many of the writings of the Lebanese Phoenicianists concerned with Phoenician history, which can be found in the *Revue Phénicienne* were embroiled to suit the interests of their authors (Quinn 2018, 7). Phoenicianism is no longer viable as a political party in Lebanon today, following notably the events of the Lebanese civil war. However, it has had an enormous impact on national identity in Lebanon, and we will detail how in the paragraphs that follow.

Post-colonial perceptions: from national identities to pop culture

The shift in scholarly perceptions

So far, we have tackled perceptions of Phoenician identity from a variety of external sources, ranging from ancient Greece to 19th century Great Britain. We have seen that attitudes to the Phoenicians have always been shaped by the agendas of the various groups interacting (or not) with them, thus creating stereotypes. These stereotypes have in turn been used for nationalistic purposes, with the help of early archaeologists accentuating them even more. But as we approached the mid-twentieth century, European scholarly perspectives began to shift. In the aftermath of World War II, culture-historical archaeology was much less in favour. Racist paradigms that had been widely adopted because they fitted the natural history norms that were so revolutionary in the late 19th and early 20th century began to be reconsidered. With the beginnings of the space race, all of the scientific world experienced a sort of renaissance, and archaeology was not exempt from this (Watson 2008, 29). In the 1960s, the inception of processual archaeology and the primordial importance it placed on laboratory evidence marked a clear break from earlier tendencies that relied much more on ancient literature (Shanks and Hodder 2007, 162). In terms of Phoenician studies, Sabatino Moscati, although not a processualist himself can be considered the face of this renewal of perspectives, having enlarged the corpus of material helping to define Phoenician culture (Vella 2019, 26). He expanded the discipline by leading excavations in Italy, and establishing the famous *Rivista di Studi Fenici* (Leclan 1995, 3). Moscati is also credited for having contributed to confining the now conventional Phoenician period to 1200-300 BCE

(Salle 1995, 555). His two monographs on the Phoenicians, published in 1968 and 1988 respectively, show a marked interest in asking the question 'Who were the Phoenicians?' (Karageorghis 2004, 86) and although the monographs do not necessarily answer the question in a revolutionary way, and we can still detect legible influence from the earlier authors, the intention to generate interest in a culture that had long been dismissed is evident and admirable. Another pioneer in the field was Hans Georg Niemeyer, who also encouraged new research and international symposia, as illustrated by his volume *Phonizer in Westen* (1979). Following Niemeyer and Moscati's initiative, a wave of renewed interest and refreshed scholarship appeared in Phoenician studies, with an increasing number of scholars from the Mediterranean joining the discussion and therefore adding a local perspective that was cruelly missing from earlier studies (Ciasca 1997, 27). More monographs were published subsequently, such as Krings 1995 and Markoe 2000. Phoenician studies developed in the face of Biblical archaeology, reacting to the anti-semitism prevalent in the earlier studies (Salle 1995, 559). However, it was not until Quinn's *In Search of the Phoenicians* (2018) that we saw a drastic shift in perspective[4]. The mid and late 20th century studies on the Phoenicians still used the traditional grouping geographically and discussed several aspects of Phoenician culture that actually stemmed directly from the very stereotypes we have been referring to: economy and trade, religion, the alphabet, arts and crafts, navigation, etc… (Salle 1995, 559). Quinn questions this systematic classification, and more importantly, the legitimacy of Phoenician identity itself, which she argues is (as we have just demonstrated) a constructed product made by and for external groups. To date, this is the greatest shift in Phoenician scholarship, and leading up to it, there has been a greater consciousness and intention in recent years to consider things from a local perspective, and this is especially the case in Cypriot and Spanish contemporary archaeology (Aubet 2001; Iacovou 2004).

National identities in the post-colonial Mediterranean

One major factor contributing to the inclusion of an increasing number of local Mediterranean scholars in the research on the Phoenicians is undoubtedly the decolonisation of a number of those countries, starting with Lebanon in 1943, Tunisia in 1954, Cyprus in 1960, and Malta in 1964. Although much research in these countries is still instigated by European or American institutions, it is now almost invariably done in collaboration with a local institution, therefore involving more local archaeologists and fostering an interest from the inside. These countries can no longer be considered suppliers for European museums, but they now have their own incentives for doing research. On the other hand, independence clearly implies the construction of a national identity, which was often done with the (conscious or unconscious) contribution of archaeology. The Phoenician aspect played a

[4] One could also mention Bernal's *Black Athena* (1987) as a work that has changed the face of perceptions of the Phoenicians, but it is not a volume specifically dedicated to this culture, and, as Bernal himself admits "the political purpose of Black Athena is, of course, to lessen European cultural arrogance" (Bernal 1987, 73).

relatively important part depending on which country we are talking about. As we have just seen, it was crucial in fabricating national identity in Lebanon, starting with a build-up years before actual independence. A parallel can be drawn here with Tunisia. The French colonial policy over there was much more aggressive than it was in Lebanon, with much more emphasis put on the legitimacy of the colonisation justified by the French perception of their empire as a revival of the Roman Empire (Quinn 2018, 12). Therefore, the natural reaction of the Tunisians was to associate with the Carthaginian and fight, in a sense, their fourth Punic war. France therefore managed to promote Phoenician identity in the minds of both the native Lebanese and the native Tunisians, with two very different agendas in mind. While in Lebanon it was trying to foster sectarianism in order to avoid a large coalition (Quinn 2018, 9); its aggressive policy in Tunisia managed to achieve just that. The French did not encourage the Tunisian identification with the Carthaginians, it was instead a logical consequence of their own identification with the Romans. In Lebanon, the French were minting coins depicting Phoenician ships during the mandate period, and these coins were reissued after independence (Quinn 2018, 10) (Figure 11). In Tunisia, the independent government also used symbolic Phoenician imagery and represented a Phoenician ship on its national emblem (Figure 12).



Figure 11: A Lebanese 5 piastre coin from 1925. Public domain.

Although nowadays both Lebanon and Tunisia acknowledge a mosaic of cultures that have shaped their national identities (and have done so since the early days of independence), the Phoenician aspect of it has been a strong marker in both countries. In Lebanon, even after the demise of Phoenicianism, Phoenician heritage is still used to assert difference with the rest of the Arab world (Quinn 2018, 11). It comes as no surprise that the modern countries with the strongest identifications to the Phoenicians were the ones where the most important centres were located; Lebanon covering roughly 90% of the ancient Phoenician homeland, and Tunisia home to Carthage, which gained considerable importance in the ancient history of the Mediterranean, establishing its own colonies and generating Punic culture.



Figure 12: Coat of arms of Tunisia. Public domain.

Two other post-colonial countries that would be interesting to consider are Cyprus and Malta. Both islands with crossroads positions, they also share this multicultural aspect with Lebanon and Tunisia. However, the part played by Phoenician identifications is more minimal there. Contemporary Malta has a fondness for the Phoenicians that it is difficult to trace in academic articles, but the Maltese regard Phoenician culture with pride. National identity in Malta is complicated to say the least, but

Catholicism plays a prominent role in it. Here, it can be interesting to draw a parallel between Maltese Catholics and the Lebanese Christians who claim to be descended from the Phoenicians, as the Maltese can somewhat relate to them, in the sense that they also exhibit a strong rejection of Arab culture (although Maltese is a Semitic language) (Frendo 1988, 206). In fact, the Maltese in the 1920s also adopted the popular view among Lebanese Phoenicianists that the Phoenicians were not Semitic (Vella 1996, 247). The British also played on this by claiming a shared Phoenician heritage between themselves and the Maltese (Vella and Gilkes 2001, 353). However, I believe that it is precisely because of this strong Catholic identity that Malta exhibits less of an identification with the Phoenicians. A similar point can be made for Cyprus with regards to Greek identity. Although it is acknowledged that the Phoenicians definitely played a part in the island's history, it is not the main culture in Cypriot identifications, which obviously turn towards Greece. In fact, the main struggle in Cyprus under British rule was between the Greek Cypriot nationalists and the British, who wanted to constrain this identification for fear of losing their control over the island. It has been argued that they invented the Eteocypriots in this context in the 1920s and 1930s, because anti-semitism was still strong and therefore they could not invoke the narrative of a Phoenician ancestry in Cyprus (Given 1998, 13). Greek identity ended up prevailing, and today, it is the main language of the island. Therefore, both Cyprus and Malta recognize their Phoenician heritage, but it is not as much part of their national identities as in Lebanon and Tunisia, because of their identifications with other dominant cultures.

On a final note, it is interesting to note that in recent history, neither Italy nor Spain have strong national identifications with the Phoenicians, despite having played a major role in the history of this culture. This may be due to the fact that they have not experienced 20th century colonialism, and that they are both arguably more in the European sphere than the Mediterranean of the economic South, even though they have always been major actors in this network. Arguably again, identifications in Italy and Spain seem to focus more on local and regional entities than on concepts as broad as Catholic, Greek, or Phoenician, which also helps explain this lack of nation-wide enthusiasm for the Phoenicians. That being said, Spanish and Italian scholarship have been phenomenal in their contributions to Phoenician studies, and the absence of a popular interest for the Phoenicians is absolutely not reflected in academia.

Pop culture Phoenicians

For the final segment of this chapter, I will move away from the academic world to focus on popular culture. I strongly believe that in order to fully understand the dynamics of perceptions on the Phoenicians, we need to consider the way they have been represented in less conventional sources, which is where most non-academics will have encountered them (aside from museums, which we will come to in the following chapters). Arguably, a considerable number of people will have read the Homeric epics, or at least a simplified version of them as they are a requirement of many school

curricula. In fact, the Homeric epics can actually be considered pop culture of antiquity, as they were originally oral stories, not reserved for a particularly educated elite. Therefore, it is safe to assume that since they have been around, these sources have been widely accessible, and this is where many people encountered representations of the Phoenicians. As we have already been through these representations earlier, I will not dwell on them, but I think it is important to keep the Homeric epics in mind as a pop culture source as well as an academic one.

Another source that I have discussed, and which is not an academic text is the novel *Salammbô*. Once again, this is an accessible piece which does not require specialist knowledge in order to be read, and it is widely available. And while Flaubert was extremely conscientious in his writing process (even though this did not prevent him from adopting a very orientalist perspective), not many pop culture authors went to the lengths he did. The famous comic book series *Asterix* has a recurrent Phoenician character, called Ekonomikrisis in English and Epidemaïs in the French original, who appears in three volumes. Ekonomikrisis is depicted as a corpulent hairy man, who sometimes shows up to trade various objects (Figure 13). The official *Asterix* website (2020) calls him a “model entrepreneur”, and describes him as follows:

> A Phoenician travelling merchant, Ekonomikrisis is a pioneering trader who employs the slyest rules of liberalism in the Roman Empire and remodels them to his advantage. Demonstrating great expertise in cutting-edge communication techniques, he rechristens the rowers on his commercial galley «partners», united under the aegis of a «partnership contract» drawn up in good form, in which he doesn't neglect to reserve the posts of Chairman and Managing Director for himself.
>
> The terms may have changed, but this new breed of MD with unquestioned managerial authority ill disguises the fact that he's exploiting his men in the form of good, old-fashioned slavery: it has to be said, Ekonomikrisis created a formidable system in which everyone ends up working for his profit alone!
>
> Even worse, if you aren't one of his «partners» and you don't row for him, watch out: Ekonomikrisis is no doubt already dreaming of selling you as a slave, just to get something out of your journey on his boat!



Figure 13: Extract from Asterix and the black gold.

This description is obviously heavily influenced by the now familiar stereotypes about the Phoenicians: greedy cunning tradesmen, always on the lookout for profit, no matter the means. I do not know of other Phoenician characters that have made it to pop culture. Once again, this is symptomatic of Eurocentrism. The vast majority of works of fiction that are set in Antiquity focus on the Greeks or the Romans (and sometimes the Egyptians, albeit this is almost always Roman Egypt). Even more than in academia, Phoenicians are set aside in pop culture, and when they are represented, it is with the same stereotypes that have stuck on them since Antiquity.

The three examples I have discussed so far have been representations of Phoenicians by external cultures (Greek, French, and Belgian). As far as I know, there are no major Phoenician characters in pop culture fiction from modern countries that have witnessed Phoenician occupation. What we do have though, are many references to the Phoenicians. In Tunisia, for example, there is an amusement park called *Carthageland*, where one can experience rides such as *The Gardens of Hamilcar*, *The Temple of Baal*, or *The March of Hanniba*l. Tunisia's first national television was called *Hannibal TV* (Quinn 2018, 13). In both Malta and Lebanon there is a *Phoenicia* hotel (they are independent from one another). In fact, Lebanon is full of businesses taking up the name 'Phoenicia' or 'Phoenician', ranging from bookstores, to financial enterprises, to restaurants and pharmacies. None of the aforementioned examples goes beyond borrowing a name in their identification with Phoenicia, except for *Carthageland* which tries to be somewhat thematic while remaining child-friendly (a delicate balance when one considers the tophet debate), and essentially features many plastic elephants (Lafrenz Samuels and Van Dommelen 2019, 738). However, I think that the simple fact of appropriating a name means a lot in terms of the perception of the general public. The contemporary Lebanese, Tunisians, or Maltese do not identify with orientalist figures like Salammbô or Ekonomikrisis. Instead, they have their own idealized (but equally stereotyped) views of the ancient Phoenicians. This is echoed on social media, where posts claiming that "you are reading and commenting on this post cause the Phoenicians our ancestors taught you how by creating the alphabet" surface rather regularly in the feeds of Lebanese users (Figure 14). This simplified, idealised image is also attested in popular websites, for example in an article by *the961* entitled *15 mind-blowing facts about the Phoenicians you never knew* (2017). While some of these facts are accurate, although violently simplified, others are clearly nonsense such as "the Phoenicians were the first to accept



Figure 14: Facebook post screenshotted from the author's feed.

Christianity", or "Phoenicians reached the Americas before Christopher Columbus". Moreover, this article overuses the verb invented, as it attributes the invention of the alphabet, the number zero, glass manufacture, and the colour purple all to the Phoenicians[5]. A similar article was published on the blog *The Sicilian Godmother* (2015). It refers to the Phoenicians as one of the three ancient superpowers, along with Greece and Rome, and describes them as follows: "Fearless sailors and ingenious traders throughout the known world, the Phoenicians invented money, created an alphabetic script for taking inventory, and built the world's first import-export economy." It also argues that to get the Phoenician feel in Sicily, one must eat pasta with lentils, which were among the cereals the Phoenicians imported to Sicily.

The point of going through popular culture sources was to highlight the distinction in the nature and the perceptions of the Phoenicians through the eyes of external cultures as well as through the eyes of the local populations living in the contemporary equivalents of their realm. It is striking to me that the only fictional Phoenician characters are all from external sources, and I think it can be explained by the fact that the people who claim descendance from the Phoenicians might not necessarily feel the need to construct a generic Phoenician character, because they identify with them, i.e., their image of the ancient Phoenicians is a more or less distorted reflection of their image of themselves. On the other hand, the abundance of Lebanese, Tunisian, Sicilian, Maltese, etc. references to the Phoenicians by the general public testifies the intention of recognition. It is debatable whether this need for recognition comes as a reaction against the Eurocentric perspective or as a need to, on the contrary, match a European civilised mould (as is the case in Lebanon and Malta). The essence of the pop culture sources themselves in post-colonial countries can be explained by cultural factors, especially in terms of the public's attitude to archaeology and museums. In Lebanon for example, many of the issues linked to this attitude (a general disregard for archaeology) are linked to the fact that many studies are still published in foreign languages (Seeden 1994, 144). Malta illustrates another example of this indifference. Like in Lebanon, archaeological sites are represented on national emblems such as postcards, bills, and stamps, but archaeology is still considered a foreign land (Vella and Gilkes 2001, 377). The important conclusion to draw from the pop culture perceptions is that they are a claim for identity of contemporary populations, and that the Phoenicians (whether they would have liked it or not) play a primordial role in this.

Conclusions: The Fabrication of the Phoenicians

The aim of this chapter was to give an overview of the perceptions of the Phoenicians, from ancient to present day sources in which they are represented. The earliest sources that mention the Phoenicians

[5] It is worth noting that some artists and intellectuals such as Ziad Al-Rahbani in his 1980 song "يا زمان الطائفية" (Oh times of Sectarianism) played on these stereotypical views used to feed the Lebanese complex of superiority, commenting on the ongoing sectarian conflict with a satirical reminder of the invention of purple dye, alphabet and glass.

(the Assyrian and Egyptian records) do not make too much of them. However, as soon as the Phoenicians are mentioned in the Bible and the Homeric epics stereotypes start to form. These stereotypes are echoed and sometimes exacerbated in the classical sources. Much later, they are reflected again in the works of early academics studying Phoenicia, because of their heavy reliance on these sources. In the end, then, it comes as no surprise that the sources influence each other, but what is surprising is the lack of a critical approach in the academic world until very recently. Up until the 2000s, scholars compiling monographs on Phoenicia have all followed a similar structure, with a categorization obviously influenced by the main 'characteristics' of the Phoenicians constructed by external perceptions throughout history. Today, this methodology, which has been taken for granted for as long as Phoenician studies have existed, is finally being reconsidered, and this thesis aims to align itself to the new angle of study on the Phoenicians, accepting that they are what one can call a constructed culture.

Another point raised in this chapter was the importance of identification and appropriation in the formation of national identity. Archaeology has always been intertwined with nationalism because it is versatile and tangible, and therefore favours a web of interpretations (Diaz-Andreu and Champion 1996). Phoenician archaeology has not been an exception to this. In Ireland, the Phoenician claim was used to promote a civilised past against the associations with savagery the Irish often fell victim to in the 18th century. Later on, in Britain, the Phoenicians served as role models for the establishment of a successful yet peaceful commercial empire. France manipulated claims for Phoenician identity in Lebanon for political purposes, while at the same time generating a similar identification in Tunisia without necessarily meaning to. All these appropriations show that identifications with a people or culture do not need to be racial or ethnic, but that they can take several forms. However, post-colonial countries tend to favour an ethnic identification because of their need to construct national identity.

The aforementioned appropriations of Phoenician identity have often been selective in the traits they chose to identify with. For example, the British were keen on the maritime, commercial aspect of the Phoenicians, and ignored their representations as barbaric and decadent in many sources. Similarly, the Lebanese Phoenicianists saw themselves in this commercial aspect, and took pride in the invention of the alphabet, as a symbol of civilisation, while disregarding the idea that the Phoenicians were seen as corrupt and treacherous in their mercantile activity.

This patchwork of perceptions has been affected by many factors, both in terms of academia and pop culture. In the ancient representations of the Phoenicians, political climate played a major role and serves in explaining the different attitudes to the Phoenicians. Politics have also played a part in more modern perceptions, such as those of France and Britain. Another important factor was the general cultural atmosphere, leaded with anti-Semitism in 19th century Europe. Additionally, perceptions of the Phoenicians at that time were influenced by romanticism, as well as the hellenocentric notions

leftover from the Renaissance. Most importantly, orientalism has played a major role in the way the Phoenicians have been perceived.

In the 20th century, academic perceptions started to shift gradually, rejecting culture-historical perspectives and making attempts at more comprehensive studies on the Phoenicians, often deploring the state of research, which unfortunately has not evolved much in many of the areas we are concerned about (such as the coast of Lebanon as well as many other Mediterranean coastal sites now buried under modern cities), and is unlikely to do so in the near future. Today, we finally have studies happening with a more local element in them, and the Phoenicians are generating a growing interest among scholarly communities. However, the same cannot be said of pop culture. Many representations of the Phoenicians in pop culture retain orientalist stereotypes, or culturally cleaving ethnic claims; thus shading the progress made by academia, as pop culture remains the primary means by which the general public encounter the Phoenicians. The heritage of Phoenicianism in Lebanon is a striking example of local lay people utilising outdated Eurocentric perspectives to fabricate an identity (Liverani 1998, 20).

In conclusion, I believe it can be safely proposed that Phoenician identity is a fabricated identity. With no Phoenician word meaning 'Phoenician', and clear evidence that the local populations never identified at such a high level focusing instead on family groups or regional communities, what we call Phoenician identity is actually a fictional construct shaped by many different perceptions. In a way, Phoenician identity has been defined in a negative space, where other known entities do not exist (Salle 1995, 561). From the coining of the word Phoenician by the Greeks to recent DNA research claiming to be able to trace Phoenician genetic traits in contemporary Mediterranean populations (Zalloua et al.), it has all been a process of making a people. Of course, the people we call Phoenicians existed, but it is doubtful they were conscious of themselves as Phoenicians. This identity has been imposed on them by all the groups that have needed it to fulfil a purpose or another (including academic research). It is obvious that archaeology will never attain an ideal truth, and this is not what I seek to do in this thesis. Instead, the following chapters will be focusing on Phoenician displays in museums, taking into consideration the fact that Phoenician identity is an intangible and shifting concept, in order to understand how this has affected the displays.

Part 2 | Phoenicians on display

Introduction & Methodology

Phoenician material has been displayed in museums for the last two centuries. In the next three chapters, I will be investigating the treatment of this material in museums, taking into consideration the different contexts of each museum and its collection. Data has been collected from twenty museums across eight countries (see table 1). As with every research project, however, some constraints linked to timing, funding, and factors beyond my control need to be acknowledged. Some museums were closed for renovation at the time of fieldwork (this was the case for the Carthage museum in Tunisia as well as the Paphos and Larnaca museums in Cyprus). Other museums were not included despite the fact that they own Phoenician collections because of the need to prioritise. This was the case for the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Heraklion museum, and the Istanbul Archaeology Museum. The selection of the museums used in this study was done through a careful process of identifying parent institutions of material exhibited in some of the most important recent exhibitions focusing largely on the Phoenicians, namely *La Méditerranée des Phéniciens de Tyr à Carthage* (Institut du Monde Arabe, 2007), and *Assyria to Iberia at the dawn of the classical age* (Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2014). I then filtered the museums based on feasibility criteria in order for the project to fit within the three-year PhD time frame. Museums falling within the realm of Phoenician expansion were therefore privileged as well as those with a significant portion of Phoenician material based on the number of catalogue entries in publications related to the aforementioned exhibitions. Some museums, such as the one in Idalion, were additions suggested by curators in other museums or scholars I interacted with throughout the course of the thesis.

Country	**Museums**	**Date**
Lebanon	Beirut National Museum	15/12/2017
	American University of Beirut (AUB) Archaeological Museum	19/12/2017
Cyprus	The Cyprus Museum	08/01/2019
	Archaeological Museum of the Limassol District	10/01/2019
	Archaeological Museum of Ancient Idalion	11/01/2019

Country	Museums	Date
France	Musée du Louvre	07/03/2018
United Kingdom	British Museum	21/09/2018
Tunisia	National Bardo Museum	16/05/2018
Malta	National Museum of Archaeology (Valletta)	22/05/2018
Spain	Museo Arqueológico Nacional	08/05/2019
	Museo de Málaga	14/05/2019
	Museo de Cádiz	16/05/2019
	Museo Arqueológico de Sevilla	21/05/2019
	Museo de Huelva	22/05/2019
Italy	Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Cagliari	03/09/2019
	Museo Archeologico Ferruccio Barreca	04/09/2019
	Museo Civico Giovanni Marongiu	07/09/2019
	Museo Archeologico Regionale Antonio Salinas	10/09/2019
	Museo Lilibeo	11/09/2019
	Museo Whitaker	12/09/2019

Table 1: Museums visited by country and date.

The methodology for this study blends practices from museology, archaeology, and social anthropology. Generally, comparative studies of museums do not exceed four establishments in total, and as a result, it was challenging to base this work on a single specific reference. There is also a lack of research done on Mediterranean museums in comparison to Europe and North America (Skeates 2005, 303). The inclusion of twenty museums (as many as possible considering time and practicality constraints) was intentionally meant to feature a breadth of perspectives from all around the Mediterranean. There was some imbalance generated by this approach, however, and this is linked to divergence in the number of museums existing in the different countries. In general, European countries such as Italy, Spain, and Cyprus, have a larger concentration of museums than countries in the economic south such as Lebanon and Tunisia. This discrepancy is in fact telling in itself, as it reflects both the state of research on Phoenician material and the legacy of colonialism and imperialism in some of these countries (this is also evident when looking at the Phoenician collection of the Louvre, which comes predominantly from Lebanon and Tunisia) (Skeates 2005, 307). It is also worth noting that national museums in the region were often established by colonial powers (Skeates 2005, 306). Cyprus in particular is interesting in this regard because although much Cypriot material is present in large international museums, the country showed intensive research activity which is reflected in the number of regional museums present around the island (Gaber 1989; Bounia and Stylianou-Lambert 2011). This work thus aims to fill a gap in the study of Mediterranean museums by using methods drawn from sociology, archaeology, and museums studies.

Beginning with the sociological aspect, in each museum, informal interviews were conducted with at least one curator involved with Phoenician collections (see table 2 for list of curators). Prior to my visits, every curator was contacted via email and given a brief introduction to the project before consenting to set up a meeting. Curators were also provided with consent forms and information sheets about their participation in the research (see Appendix 4). Using interviews as a data collection method is a well-known process in qualitative research (De Fina and Perrino 2011, 2).

The interviews were semi-structured and started with a short presentation of the aims of the projects, the main research questions, and more precisely the specific outcomes sought from research in the museums. The choice of semi-structured interviews stems from the fact that this is a flexible method which has been widely use throughout disciplines and can be adapted to the respondent and context of the interview (Roulston and Choi 2018, 234). The majority of times, an organic informal discussion about the state of the Phoenician collections in the context of the museum and sometimes more largely the country followed naturally from this. However, I sometimes had to probe curators for specific answers I was seeking, as is in the nature of semi-structured interviews (Roulston and Choi 2018, 233). Typical questions revolved around the date of the current displays, whether they had changed over time, and whether there was a certain rationale behind the interpretation and display of the collections. Some questions were also centred on specific objects or showcases I had particular interest

in (as for example the tridacna shell from the British Museum mentioned in Chapter 1). The questions were generated by a breakdown of the main research question: in what way are Phoenician collections perceived and presented in museums, which I will detail further in Chapter 3. The discussions took place either directly before or after I toured the museum. In some instances, they stretched as the curators walked me through the Phoenician displays to illustrate their cases, as walk-along interviews. The walk-along interview is a method used relatively often in museum research, but it usually focuses on audiences as the interviewees (Madsen 2017). In the case of this project, the walk-along interviews were especially useful when it was my first visit to the museum, and I was not yet familiar with the space. Moreover, it allowed the curators to refer to specific examples of a particular showcase, panel, or assemblage in the wider narrative. Walk-along interviews are often used to study relationships to space (Skov et. al. 2018), and for this thesis it was interesting to understand how the curators conceptualised the space.

The interviews were not recorded, but I took extensive notes while discussing with the curators. The reason behind this choice is that I wanted to create a natural and comfortable environment for the curators. In fact, interviews with curators, as experts in their fields and as the only people able to provide such a breadth of information on specific museum displays can be considered elite interviews (Hoschild 2009). In general, elite interviews tend not to be recorded as the respondents feel more comfortable and tend to engage more off the record in these situations (Harvey 2011, 438). All the curators were sent a copy of the paragraphs where they are cited prior to the submission of the thesis in order to ensure all the information attributed to the interviews was correct.

Curator	**Museum**
Anne Marie Afeiche	Beirut National Museum
Reine Mady	American University of Beirut (AUB) Archaeological Museum
Despina Pilides	The Cyprus Museum
Yiannis Violaris	Archaeological Museum of the Limassol District
Anna Satraki	Archaeological Museum of Ancient Idalion/Archaeological Museum of the Larnaca District
Hélène Le Meaux	Musée du Louvre
Jonathan Tubb (Department of the Middle East) Thomas Kiely (Department of Greece and Rome)	British Museum

Lamia Fersi	National Bardo Museum
Sharon Sultana	National Museum of Archaeology (Valletta)
Alicia Rodero Virginia Salve (archives) Aurora Ladero (archives)	Museo Arqueológico Nacional
José Ángel Palomares Samper	Museo de Málaga
Juan Ignacio Vallejo Sánchez María Dolores López De La Orden	Museo de Cádiz
Curator	**Museum**
Concha San Martín	Museo de Sevilla
Elena Aguilera Collado	Museo de Huelva
Manuela Puddu	Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Cagliari
Sara Muscuso	Museo Archeologico Ferruccio Barreca
Carla Del Vais	Museo Civico Giovanni Marongiu
Giuliana Sara Lucia Ferruzza Giuseppa Mizzaro (archives)	Museo Archeologico Regionale Antonio Salinas
Maria Grazia Griffo	Museo Lilibeo
Pamela Toti	Museo Whitaker

Table 2: Curators by museum.

My research is primarily based on the displays at the time of my visit to the museums, which I will discuss in more detail below. However, an important part of addressing the question of perceptions in museums displays is the historical factor. For this reason, an element of historical research has been incorporated to the project in all the museums where this was possible. Part of it came from the informal interviews with curators, as I usually asked them about the history of the displays, when it was last updated, and the different phases the museum had been through. This gave me a sense of the general history of the museum and of the Phoenician collections within this particular context.

Adding to this, the museums sometimes had libraries and archival material I was able to access. Archival research is a well-known practice of museum studies and it plays a large part in understanding the history of collections and what led to their current display (Moser 2010, 23). However, archives tend to be more useful to pinpoint precise information about specific artefacts (Alberti 2005, 571). I thus used them as reference point for the history of movement and display of

certain objects some of the museums have been focusing their displays around, such as the Amathus vase at the Louvre or the Anthropoid sarcophagi at the Museo de Cadiz. The combination of both photographic and textual archives for these types of objects was useful because it helped me visualize the physical and ideological space they occupied throughout the history of the museum.

However, because of the scope of the study and the limited time I had to visit each museum, consult publications, and interview curators, and because of the detailed nature of museum archives, these were not the main tool I utilised to gain an understanding of the history of displays. What proved to be more useful were old guides of the museum. The main difference between guides and archives is that archival records are internal to the museum and guides are targeted towards visitors, which make them more accessible in terms of understanding the former setup of displays. These publications were telling because they present the navigation and structure of the museum through different phases, in more or less detail. In some instances, such as the Louvre for example, guides were published at regular intervals and it was quite straightforward to piece back the history of Phoenician displays. Other times like at the Bardo Museum, there were fewer guides and I had to piece together the gaps based on the interviews with the curators, who know about the most important phases of renovations in the museums. Some museums had no guides published, as was the case in the Museo de Malaga, for instance, but again, those gaps were filled by the interviews. It is interesting to note that as a general tendency, museums stopped publishing guides at the beginning of the 21st century, presumably linked to the rise of audio guides and alternative methods of visit (Tallon 2008, xiv), although there are little studies in reference to this (Hughes 2011, 37). In sum, the combination of archival research, consultation of museum guides, and historical sections of the interviews provided me with a global understanding of the history of Phoenician displays in each museum.

Aside from discussions with curators and archival analysis, one of the most important parts of the fieldwork process consisted of a survey of the museums, with a particular focus on the Phoenician displays. In some instances, such as the Beirut National Museum or the Cyprus Museum this involved touring the entire museum, as the first level of organisation of the collections was not chronological. At the Beirut National Museum for instance, the materials are divided between categories with monumental objects on the ground floor and small finds on the first floor, while the basement is dedicated to funerary practices. Therefore, Phoenician material is spread across a number of galleries. In other instances, such as the National Museum of Archaeology of Malta, the main curatorial path is chronological, with a single gallery hosting the Phoenician material[6]. The British Museum presented yet another organisational system, with only one showcase dedicated to the Phoenicians within its Levantine galleries, and the Cypriote material exhibited separately as it falls under the department of Greece and Rome. The first step of my methodology therefore consisted in locating the Phoenician

[6] At the time of fieldwork, there were also plans to open a Punic gallery adjacent to the Phoenician one.

material and placing it within the wider context of the museum, taking into consideration its place in relation to the curatorial path. This process, much like an archaeological survey, helped determine which areas of the museum to focus on and which showcases or galleries to look at in more depth. This also allows me to understand the importance the Phoenician collections take compared to the remaining material on display, a topic I will discuss in more detail below.

In most cases, I navigated the museum with a floor plan[7], marking down the locations of the Phoenician collections and, when the plan was precise enough, the individual instances of the word 'Phoenician'. I also heavily documented the displays through photographs, allowing me to later on retain a clear picture of their configuration. Some museums such as the Louvre, British Museum, and AUB Archaeological Museum greatly facilitated the task of remembering how artefacts and displays communicate within the museum thanks to digital features such as virtual tours or online catalogues including the location of each object. In most cases, however, I had to rely on memory and my personal documentation to perform post-fieldwork analysis. For this reason, the process of documenting museum displays through photographs was extremely thorough. I always aimed to have a general view of the gallery, one of each showcase, clear views of all the artefacts, every panel mentioning the Phoenicians (be it a large panel or a showcase label), every individual artefact label, and every situational plan I could find (Figures 15 and 16). This photographic record, organised by museum, was indispensable in my analysis as it allowed me to take the time to go back and explore different aspects of the displays.




Figure 15: A general view at the Museo de Málaga and the Phoenician showcase at the British Museum. Photos author's own.

[7] I did this every time it was possible, but some museums such as the National Bardo Museum do not provide floor plans for security reasons.



Figure 16: A large panel at the Museo Marongiu, a comb and its label at the Beirut National Museum, and a situational plan at the Louvre. Photos author's own.

In addition to the photographs, I also took extensive notes while visiting the museums. These mainly consisted of observations and (for the most part) first impressions about the displays. They also reflected the dual aspect of the field research: on the one hand, I was experiencing displays and collections I had not necessarily had the occasion to interact with in the past, while on the other I was undertaking analytical work as an academic. Some of these notes are therefore concerned with the general feel of the museums, collections, and displays from an audience centric point of view, while at the same time taking into consideration curatorial matters from labelling to the layout of objects within showcases. The dual nature of the project proved challenging to navigate, and is not really acknowledged in the associated theoretical literature. However, the approach is loosely based on Moser's work in which she lists a series of questions to ask of the displays, leading to an analysis constructed based on a combination of factors affecting the displays (Moser 2010, 23).

Arising from these observations were a series of cues and characteristics that could be applied in every museum. I found that I could extract some themes from the data collected during fieldwork, as museum exhibitions often rely on themselves. Some of these were based on the categories listed by Moser (2010), such as architecture and space, which I will address in Chapter 3, design, and text, which I will explore in Chapter 4. I also relied on additional factors having to do with the Phoenician nature of the collections. These include the definition of the term and the provenance of the collections I will address in Chapter 3, the stereotypes I will discuss in Chapter 4, and the stylistic elements which is the main focus of Chapter 5. Within each individual theme, patterns emerged, and they will all be discussed in detail below. In a sense, the remainder of this second part will be treated as an exhibition focusing on the main parameters affecting Phoenician collections in museums. These range from straightforward matters such as the definition and delineation of the word 'Phoenician' and the frequency and importance of it to more complex and less directly measurable parameters such as

curatorial choices and the role played by 'Phoenician style' in the interpretation of the collections. This section will therefore consist of three entities, each one focusing on a particular aspect of Phoenician museum collections. One will be dedicated to the different cues and trends traceable from the displays; another will explore the various stereotypes linked to the Phoenicians and how these have been exploited by museums; while the third will focus on the stylistic definition of Phoenician material and how this has affected displays through time.

Chapter 3 | Patterns

The twenty museums that formed the core of the sample have entirely different renderings of their respective Phoenician collections. As expected, based on the argument of Chapter 1, each one of them generates a unique experience of this material. However, some common markers can usually be identified, bringing together clusters of museums. These trends can be traced back to a range of cues, some linked to the labelling and others linked to the material. The cues, eight in total, are the main points of influence which affect the presentation and display of Phoenician material. They provide the backbone for understanding the various patterns arising from the research. In general, the cues derived from labelling are more quantifiable than those related to the collections. For instance, the former group includes mappable trends such as the definition of the term Phoenician (and Punic), the provenancing of the material, and the frequency of using the term Phoenician. To varying degrees, every museum delivers traceability in terms of how they delineate the Phoenician world both in time and space and of how often they use the term in their labelling. This group also includes less straightforward cues such as the importance held by Phoenician material in relation to the entirety of the collection. This matter is related to cues more directly tied with the collection and the structure of museums rather than the labelling, such as the organisational system of the museum, architectural constraints, and curatorial choices. In the following section, I will therefore aim to illustrate how these different trends are generated in each museum according to the various parameters and how this is reflected in the collection, drawing parallels between different museums, displays, and artefacts.

While patterns emerged organically from my observations of the displays and discussions with curators, the choice of organising them based on specific cues was determined by the main research question of this thesis: how is Phoenician identity perceived in different museums, and how does this relate to historical, literary and cultural perceptions of the Phoenicians? This question can be broken down into a number of more approachable ones which I used as guides during the fieldwork. Some of these engendered the various cues this segment focuses on, while others linked with the more intuitive concepts of style and stereotypes which form the two other spheres of this chapter. The relationships between sub-research questions and cues are best illustrated by the below graph (Chart 1.).

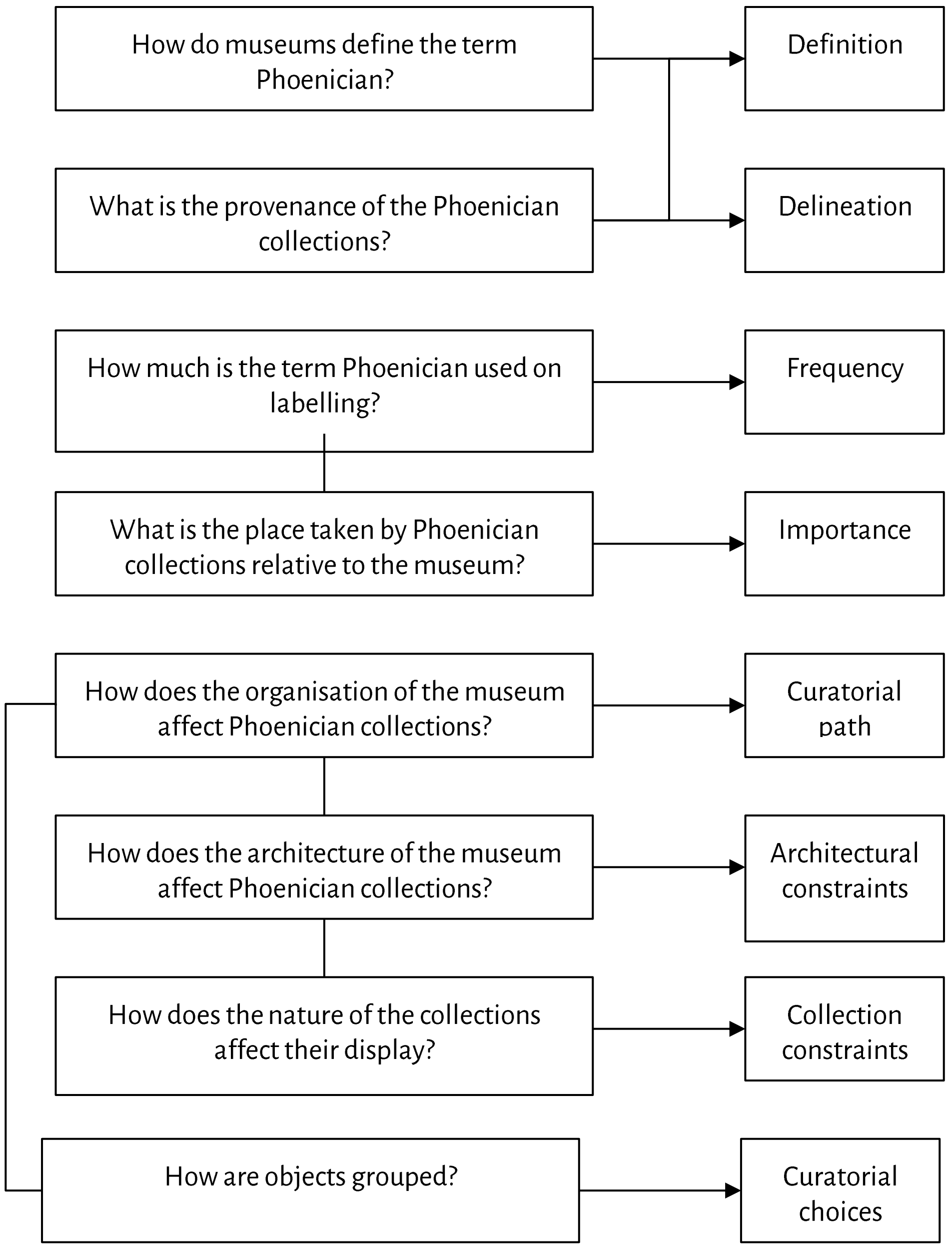


Chart 1: Relationships between main questions.

As illustrated by the graph, each question can be translated into a specific cue, and some questions result as a follow up to others. This implies that the various cues, schematised above as standalone, will inevitably become linked to one another as their analysis unfolds. The cues essentially function as parameters which will allow the creation of clusters of museums and identify certain patterns in different fields. By the end of this segment, we will emerge with a network of relationships taking place in different layers of meaning, which will be the basis of mapping out perceptions of Phoenician museum collections.

Definition

In archaeology

The first cue I will be discussing is the temporal definition of the Phoenician period. In academia today, the start of this period is traditionally set to coincide with the beginning of the Iron Age in the Near East (c. 1200 BCE), and ending with the conquest of Alexander the Great in 333 BCE. However, this definition comes with many nuances. The current marker of 1200 BCE is partially the result of a now-obsolete model advocating for a general collapse at the end of the Late Bronze Age in the Eastern Mediterranean (Bonnet 1995, 649). Having the beginning of the Phoenician period coincide with a new age provided culture-historical archaeologists with a convenient overlap. However, the picture painted by the material record complicates this seemingly straightforward dating. Many sites on the Levantine coasts and Cyprus now show clear evidence for continuity between the Late Bronze Age and the Iron Age, with little to no destruction layers (Aruz et al. 2014, 2; Tubb 2014, 132; Fontan and Le Meaux 2007, 18). This has led to a shift away from the crisis and collapse paradigm supported even further by the material culture. In fact, much of the material culture of early Iron Age Phoenician cities presents undeniable similarities to that of the Late Bronze Age, which would suggest that these were continuously inhabited by the same people and oppose the theory of an external cultural group establishing itself on the Levantine coast at the time (Killebrew 2019, 39). This continuity is now broadly acknowledged, but it implies that the sharp line drawn at 1200 BCE does not cut a clear section between the two periods.

Nonetheless, establishing the start of the Phoenician period around the beginning of the Iron Age is not only a product of this model; textual evidence is also an important player here. In fact, the earliest mention of the Phoenicians only appears in the *Iliad*, around the 11th century BCE (Sherratt 2010, 122). Of course, the *Story of Wenamun*, also dated to the 11th century BCE, relates the voyage of an Egyptian official to the central Levantine coast, featuring stops at both Tyre and Byblos, but it does not mention the word 'Phoenicia'/'Phoenician' *per se* yet (Sader 2019, 35). The 11th century is also the date of the earliest Phoenician inscription known today, on the sarcophagus of Ahiram (now exhibited at the National Museum of Beirut) (Elayi 2013, 111). It is therefore logical to set the beginning of the Phoenician period around the date where both the first writing in the Phoenician language and the first mention of the Phoenicians in text appear.

The eastern date for the end of the Phoenician period, 333 BCE is also convenient but debatable. The period between the conquest of Alexander the Great and the settling of the Romans in modern-day Lebanon is usually referred to as Hellenistic. The term seems to imply the absence of any Greek elements in the culture prior to the conquest, which has long been disproved by archaeological, onomastic, and historical evidence (Bonnet 2019, 102). Artefacts showing clear Hellenic influence are attested on the Phoenician coast as early as the 6th century BCE, and general contacts between the Aegean and the Levantine coast are well known since the Bronze Age (Cline and Cline, 1998). Because

of this long-term dynamic of influence, the conquest of the Phoenician cities does not mark a stark break in the material culture either, with some artefacts and practices continuing through the Seleucid period (Bonnet 2019, 100). The definition of the Phoenician period in the East, therefore, relies on key historical events as its boundaries, but it offers more nuances than the strict time frame of 1200-333 BCE alludes to.

This definition will shift and change as we move West (Sagona 2008). Rather exceptionally for a country with clear (at least partially) Phoenician settlements, the official chronology of Cyprus does not include a purely Phoenician period. In fact, Cyprus has its particular chronology rather than one following either an Aegean or a Near Eastern one, which is understandable given the unique dynamics of the island in the pre and protohistoric phases (Iacovou 2006, 29). The fact that the Phoenician era is not presented as an official period in Cyprus sets it apart from all the other Mediterranean countries with an important Phoenician presence; including places which present a similar mingling of Phoenicians and locals to the one attested in Cyprus such as southern Spain or Sardinia. This peculiarity is worth noting because it impacts both the presentation and identification of Phoenician displays in Cypriot museums.

Likewise, the definition of what constitutes the Phoenician period varies in the different Mediterranean countries with a history of Phoenician occupation. The beginning of the Phoenician era is more easily determined in the central and western Mediterranean as it is marked by clear changes in the material culture. However, this shift does not happen at the same time in Malta, Tunisia, Sicily, or southern Spain, making it impossible to set a date for the start of the Phoenician period in the central and western Mediterranean. All these changes happened after the 11th century BCE, so the typical date of 1200 BCE marking the beginning of the Phoenician era is not questioned here.

The issue becomes slightly more complicated when it comes to determining the end of the Phoenician period. An important factor coming into play here is the distinction between Phoenician and Punic. Even though the Punic period is considered a separate phase marked by the rise in power of Carthage one cannot consider perceptions of Phoenician identity without including Punic material. One reason for this is that despite the introduction and development of new types of artefacts and practices, Punic culture (in terms of language, material, and religion) remains extremely close to its Phoenician predecessor (Moscati 1995, 1). In Tunisia in particular, this brings us back to the issue of defining a clear marker we were faced with in Lebanon, but this time between Phoenician and Punic. Concerning the other Mediterranean countries that feature both a Phoenician and Punic presence, the matter of chronology also presents some complexities. In fact, not all originally Phoenician sites later became conquered by Carthage and therefore cannot be defined as Punic. Likewise, not all sites established under Carthaginian hegemony were previously Phoenician. This is particularly well illustrated by the example of Mozia and Marsala. Prior to the destruction of the site in 397 BCE, only the island of Mozia

was settled since the 8^{th} century BCE. The mainland site of Marsala (ancient Lilibeo) was then founded by the Carthaginians after the island was abandoned (Amadasi Guzzo 2012, 119). This is just one example of a Phoenician town giving way to a Punic site. Because they are not in the same physical location, the distinction is therefore quite clear. However, this is not always the case. Some Andalusian cities such as Cádiz or Málaga, for instance, exhibit variable degrees of Phoenician and Punic material culture with no straightforward way of separating the two periods. This is one of the main reasons why it is essential to consider both Phoenician and Punic material in this thesis.

In most of the Western Mediterranean, untouched by the empire of Alexander the Great, the end of the Phoenician/Punic period is usually determined by the date of the Roman conquest of specific regions. Consequently, this will also vary according to the different sites. Moreover, we are once again faced with the symptomatic continuity Phoenician sites have accustomed us to. Punic language persists until the 3^{rd} century CE, as do a number of artefact types, iconographical signs and practices linked with that culture (Tronchetti 1995, 740; Hobson 2019, 184). Despite the precise dates, Romanization does not erase Phoenician and Punic identities (at least for some time).

In museums

This lengthy segment about the various implications of setting numerical dates for the Phoenician and Punic period serves to set the stage for further examining how this period is defined in museums. Many of the issues discussed above are reflected in the variable approaches museums adopt to delineate the boundaries of the Phoenician and Punic era(s).

The below timeline illustrates how museums define the Phoenician period in terms of dates (Figure 17). In the majority of cases, these dates are extracted from the information provided by museums either in the form of timelines or as a mention on the labelling. Some museums, however, did not have specific labelling defining the extension of the Phoenician period. In those cases, the dates shown on the timeline come from the dates of artefacts labelled as Phoenician in the museums. The below table details the main indicators for the dates in each museum.

Timeline	**Labelling**	**Artefacts**
Valletta	Louvre	Museo Salinas Palermo
Museo di Cagliari	AUB Museum	Museo Lilibeo Marsala
Museo Barreca Sant'Antioco	Beirut National Museum	Museo Marongiu Cabras
Museo Arqueológico Nacional	Idalion Museum	Museo de Cádiz
Museo de Málaga	Limassol Museum	

Museo Arqueológico de Sevilla	Cyprus Museum	
Museo de Huelva	Museo Whitaker Mozia	
Timeline	**Labelling**	**Artefacts**
	Bardo Museum	
	British Museum	

Table 3: Date signalisation by museum.

In total, nine museums define the Phoenician period in one way or another through their labelling; seven have it integrated as part of a timeline, and four do not have an explicit definition for it, meaning it had to be extracted based on their collections. Interestingly, the majority of the latter group are Italian museums, which could suggest a certain centralised policy (especially since both the Cabras and the Marsala museums are relatively recent in terms of dates of current displays). These museums are also quite small in scale, which could explain why they do not need to refer to a general definition of the Phoenician period as their collections focus on regional artefacts that do not necessarily need to be related to a broader group. The other two cases are much older, with the current displays in Cádiz dating from the eighties (López 2019, pers. comm.). The Palermo museum was in a similar situation until recently (with some exhibitions from the fifties (Sara 2019, pers. comm.)), and it was partially closed for renovation at the time of writing. Thus, one could expect a future change in these two museums.

This would be particularly anticipated for Cádiz, as all the other Spanish museums included in the dataset refer to a timeline. Another common thread linking together museums with a timeline is the fact that they tend to use the timeline as a point of reference for their entire collection. This could be a national collection, as illustrated by the Museo Arqueológico Nacional which presents a complex timeline taking into consideration the different yet often simultaneous layers of Spanish history. The timeline can also refer to a smaller region, such as the one dedicated to Sardinia at the Museo di Cagliari. It is rare, however, to find a site museum using a timeline; the one at the Museo Barreca in Sant'Antioco refers to the entirety of Sardinia and the Idalion museum specifies the period of Phoenician occupation in its labelling. This demonstrates that timelines might not always be needed, especially when the collections all come from one site and can be dated based on the specific chronology of that site. In the case of regional and national museums, however, timelines can be quite useful in helping to place diversified collections in wider contexts which relate more broadly to the provenance of these collections and therefore makes for a more cohesive display. However, not all large-scale museums make use of timelines, and notable exceptions include the two international museums selected for this dataset: the British Museum and the Louvre. Given the scale of these

museums and the diversity of their collections (not only in terms of archaeology but also considering historical, artistic, and ethnographic material), it is understandable that they have not opted for a timeline as a way to represent the span of their material. In this case, a general timeline that applies to the entire museum, or even only to its archaeological collection would be too complex, which would defeat the purpose of interpretation in that it would likely be more confusing than enlightening to visitors. This is, in fact, one of the major pitfalls of large-scale international museums, especially regarding their early claims to be universal centres of learning (O'Neil 2004). Their collections are often too scattered to offer coherent information as a globality and must, therefore, be experienced as several independent units. We will explore in more detail how this affects the displays of Phoenician collections as we progress through the cues. Thus, the temporal definition of the Phoenician period is expressed in different ways by different museums. It seems that the use of a timeline is a more popular trend in the European Western Mediterranean, whereas eastern Mediterranean countries, Tunisia, as well as international large-scale museums, tend to rely on labelling to define it.

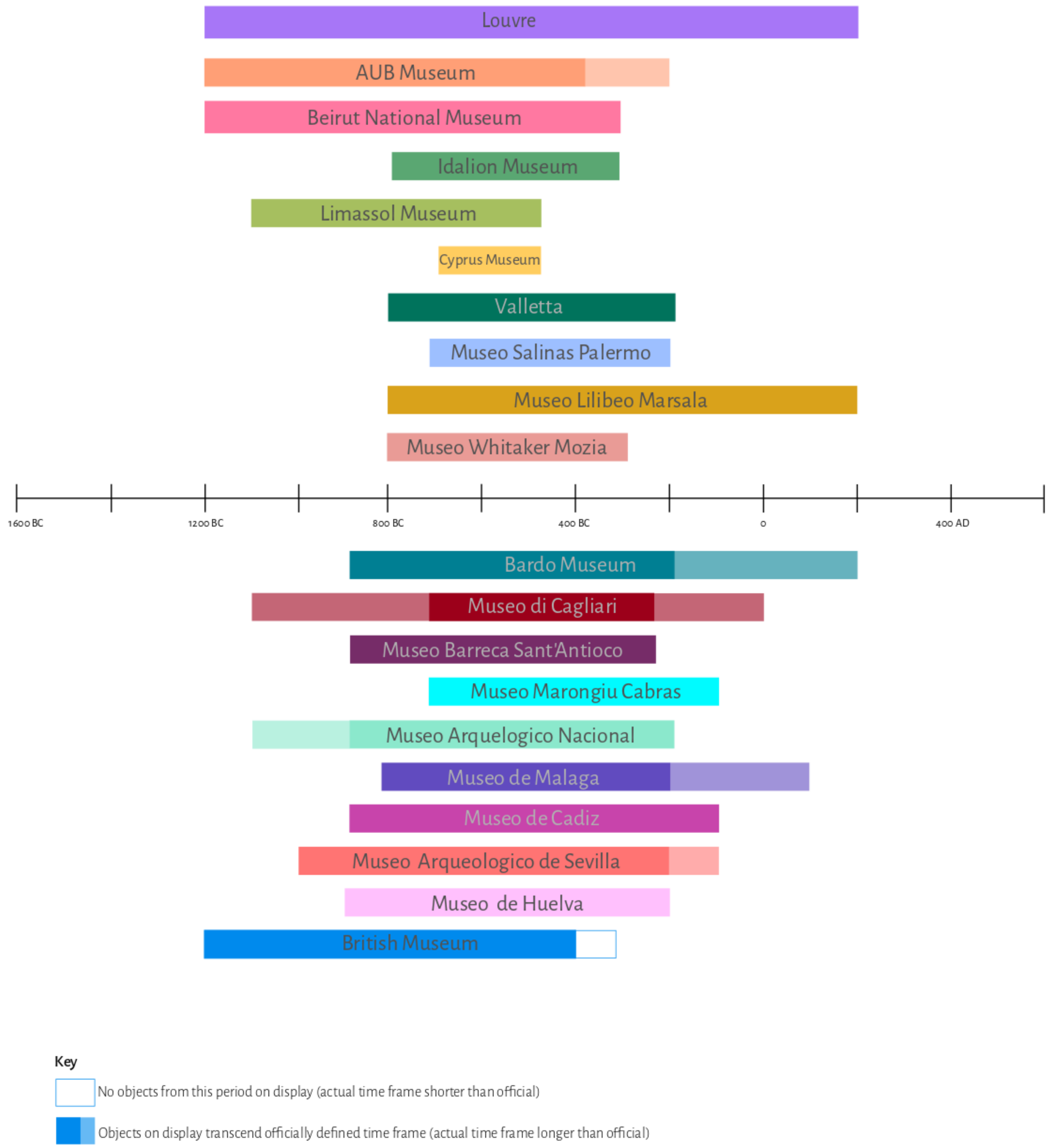


Figure 18: Timeline of the definition of the Phoenician period by museum. Author's own.

Having established through which means the museums define the Phoenician/Punic period, I created a master timeline regrouping all the definitions in order to be able to visualise and compare them (Figure 17). The museums are ordered on the timeline from East to West, except for the two international museums which are placed at the extremities. Each museum is represented by a specific colour which will be used consistently as a marker for its respective museum in all the maps, charts, and graphs to follow. On the timeline, solid colours represent definite official dates the museums set via their own timeline or their labelling for the Phoenician period. In the case of the museums that do not have official dates, the ones extracted from the material are considered definite. In some cases, museums will have material on display labelled as Phoenician, but which transcend the official definition. This phenomenon is represented by transparent colours and illustrated by the cases of the AUB museum which presents artefacts posterior to its official end date of 400 BCE and dated all the way to the second century BCE. This is also the case of the Bardo Museum, which labels material as Phoenician up to the second century CE, the Museo de Málaga where this extends to the first century CE, and the Museo Arqueológico de Sevilla which has material dated until the first century BCE. The overflowing can also happen the other way, as attested at the Museo di Cagliari which officially defines the Phoenician period as spanning between 750 and 238 BCE, but has material it calls Phoenician from the 11th century BCE and extending to the first century CE. The Museo Arqueológico Nacional also displays material anterior to its official dating, back to the 11th century BCE. The reverse phenomenon is observable at the British Museum, where the labelling establishes the Phoenician period as 1200-333 BCE but there are in fact no objects on display dated between 400 and 333 BCE. This can be explained by the fact that the British Museum applies the academic definition of the Phoenician period on its labelling but simply lacks material to cover it entirely due to the relatively small size of its Phoenician collection.[8] Other museums, especially site museums such as Idalion, Mozia, or even Huelva do not have this issue because they base their chronologies on that of their respective sites.

Concerning the museums with objects transcending their official timelines post official chronology, this can often be explained by the persistence and continuity of culture, especially in the case of Carthaginian material. At the AUB Museum, however, which has no material from the Western Mediterranean, the transcendence is due to the fact that the museum separates the period of Persian dominance from the Phoenician period in its official chronology even though Persian political control did not bring about a radical change in the material culture (Jigoulov 2016, 128). Hence, material posterior to the fifth century BCE is still presented as part of thematic showcases in the Phoenician area of the museum.

[8] It should be noted that the British Museum displays two stelae from Carthage in its Western staircase (not along the rest of the Phoenician material) dated to the 1st to 3rd centuries CE, but they were not included on the timeline in order not to skew the reading for the dates of the vast majority of Phoenician material.

When it comes to transcendence anterior to the official chronology, it is usually due to isolated imported finds which may have been reused or are markers of pre-colonial contacts. This evidence, therefore, does not serve to push back the date of permanent Phoenician installation in the central and western Mediterranean, as could be suggested from the timeline.

A variable I chose not to include as part of the timeline is the separation between the Phoenician and Punic period some museums make. In those cases, the timeline markers stretch until the end of the Punic period. One of the reasons behind this decision is the aforementioned continuum and close links between the two phases, which leads me to treat them as one entity. Moreover, because all the museums concerned by a Punic phase explicitly distinguish between that and the Phoenician phase in their individual object or showcase labelling, it would be misleading to include only the ones who do mark the break more officially on the timeline. The below table illustrates this point by detailing which museums make the distinction and at which date.

Punic phase	**Date**
Museo Lilibeo Marsala	
Museo di Cagliari	510 BCE
Museo Barreca Sant'Antioco	510 BCE
Museo Arqueológico Nacional	240 BCE
Museo de Málaga	500 BCE
Museo de Huelva	500 BCE
No distinction made	**No Punic phase**
Louvre	AUB Museum
Valletta	Beirut National Museum
Museo Salinas Palermo	Idalion Museum
Bardo Museum	Limassol Museum
Museo Marongiu Cabras	Cyprus Museum
Museo de Cádiz	Museo Whitaker Mozia
Museo Arqueológico de Sevilla	

No distinction made	No Punic phase
British Museum	

Table 4: Punic phases in museums.

Another reason for not marking the break on the master timeline is that the large majority of museums that do have it at the same time, around 500 BCE. The only exception is the Museo Arqueológico Nacional, a misleading case since the marker on its timeline does not correspond to the beginning of the Punic period in Spain but rather to the formalised Carthaginian occupation of the area following the first Punic war. Another particular case is that of the Museo Lilibeo Marsala which, despite not referring to specific dates in its general labelling, makes a clear distinction between the Phoenician and Punic periods which are exhibited in different rooms and illustrated by different sites. The fact that the Phoenician period there is solely illustrated by the sites of Mozia and Birgi whereas the Punic period is exclusive to Marsala, which is also the main focus of the museum, would, therefore, make it redundant to formulate this distinction in the labelling when the layout of the museum is enough to express it.

Most museums exhibiting Phoenician and Punic material which do not make the distinction between the two phases in their labelling simply refer to the material as Phoenician or Punic. The Bardo Museum, however, refers to the entire period from the 9th to the 2nd century BCE as Punic. This practice reflects a sense of national pride asserted by the pre-eminence of the Carthaginian past, which we will discuss in more detail when tackling cues such as frequency and importance, but in a sense, it is not surprising that a Tunisian museum would put more focus on the Punic period.

An interesting trend arising from the table is that with the exception of the Bardo Museum, all the museums which do not distinguish between the Phoenician and Punic period are museums with relatively widespread collections. This could be explained by the relative difficulty of ascribing a set date separating the two periods when the collections come from many different sites. For instance, the Louvre could set the beginning of the Punic period based on material in its collection coming from Carthage, around the 8th century BCE. However, because it also has material from Malta and Italy which predates the Punic phase at their respective sites, it could be misleading to show these artefacts within a rigid narrative about the periods. The fluidity of settlement and colonisation patterns in the central and Western Mediterranean between the 8th and the 3rd centuries therefore call for a flexible approach in terms of defining chronology in museums that display artefacts from sites with diverse histories.

Having established these premises, we can now return to the master timeline in order to track some key flags in the chronological aspect museums use to build a narrative. Perhaps the most noticeable feature of the timeline is that no two museums have the same definition of the Phoenician period.

There are no major blanks, as the overwhelming majority of them cover the period going roughly from 850 until 200 BCE, but they all have varying stretches outside this core period.

One notable exception is the Cyprus Museum, with clearly the smallest time frame for the Phoenician period covering only a couple of centuries. The Cyprus Museum presents, in fact, quite a challenge when it comes to identifying Phoenician material there. As is the general trend in most Cypriot museums (except for Idalion which has a clear phase of Phoenician occupation), the Phoenician period is not treated as a standalone entity, but rather merged with interpretations on a broader Cypriot level. This matches the academic trend in Cypriot archaeology which follows its own chronology. Considering the complexity of the situation of Iron Age Cyprus and the long history of exchanges it has with the Levantine coast, it is understandable that the Phoenicians are not emphasised in Cypriot museums the way that they can be in places like Malta. Moreover, the strong Greek identity prevalent in modern-day Cyprus, as well as the current academic shift towards a more Cypro-central perspective, also affects the visibility of Phoenician material, especially in the Cyprus Museum. Adding to that, the current displays at the Cyprus Museum date back to the 1970s and there is little to no labelling. The word Phoenician is only mentioned twice: once on the label of an inscribed object, and once on a panel making it coincide with the Archaic period. It is this superimposition which served to delineate the Phoenician period at the Cyprus Museum on the master timeline. This delineation is obviously not reflective of the full extent of Phoenician influence in Cyprus (especially at the national level) but it is a result of the confluence of all the aforementioned factors. The Cyprus Museum is set to change in the coming years, with a new museum currently being built (Pilides 2019, pers. comm.), but it remains unclear whether the Phoenician period will be treated as a standalone segment in the new museum. At the moment, it seems that it will be integrated as part of the section of the museum dedicated to Iron Age Cyprus alongside other material from this period as part of a contextual display (Pilides 2019, pers. comm).

Another museum that stands out by the space it occupies on the timeline is the Louvre. In this case, what we are witnessing is the opposite phenomenon compared to what is happening with the Cyprus Museum, in that the Louvre covers the largest time span on the timeline by far. There are several explanations for this expansive date range the most straightforward one being the large and diverse collection of the Louvre.

Due to the fact that the Phoenician and Punic material at the Louvre has been collected from sites distributed around all corners of the Mediterranean, and that the museum brings together artefacts from sites as far as Byblos, Amathus, Carthage, or Cádiz under the Phoenician umbrella, this type of broad coverage can be expected. Out of the 20 museums included in this project, the Louvre is by far the one with the most widespread Phoenician collection.

However, this alone is not enough to explain the extent of the time span. While it is true that some other museums such as the Bardo Museum and the Museo Lilibeo of Marsala also extend their

definition to the second century CE, this is only applied to objects which have kept strong Punic characteristics past the Roman conquest. At the Louvre, this treatment of late material as Phoenician is also applied to material from the Eastern Mediterranean, which by then displays practically no relation to earlier artefacts. Yet, their label still states Phoenicia as their provenance. Here, the term is not used as an adjective but rather as a geographical delineation. Because this material comes from the central Levantine coast, the Louvre ascribes its origin to Phoenicia as a way to distinguish it from other regions. Given the sheer size of the museum and the wide diversity of its collection, using the term Phoenician as a geographical marker is a way to help visitors situate the collections spatially (Le Meaux 2018, pers. comm.). It therefore functions as a signpost facilitating a more global understanding for audiences. This is of particular relevance at the Louvre because the organisation of the museum itself imposes the need for a geographical benchmark. For instance, one could argue that the British Museum also has an extensive and varied collection which could result in the term Phoenician being used as a geographical designation. The key difference between the British Museum and the Louvre, however, is that the Phoenicians collections are concentrated in one gallery in the former, whereas they are much more scattered in the latter. Even the related Cypriot collections, which belong to a different department at the British Museum, are purposefully exhibited in the vicinity of the Levantine gallery (Kiely 2018, pers. comm.). At the Louvre, on the other hand, the Phoenician, Punic, and Cypriot collections are all dispersed between a few discontinuous galleries. The navigation is not particularly straightforward despite the fact that all these galleries are located within the same aisle. Visitors find themselves having to alternate between Eastern Phoenician material, a gallery dedicated to Palmyra, some 2nd century BCE Levantine painted stelae, Carthaginian collections, Western Phoenician showcases, an Arabian section, and finally Cyprus. This is partially due to the architectural nature of the Louvre, which we will come back to later, and it can lead to confusion in terms of understanding the contextuality of the material. In these circumstances, the consistency of use of the terms Phoenicia or Phoenician therefore functions as a signpost for visitors to recognise collections originating from the same region, going beyond the traditional time frame implied by the term.

Coming back to the traditional definition of Phoenician also allows us to understand another player in the utilisation of the term by the Louvre. We have previously established that the current definition of this period resulted in an important shift in archaeological thought spearheaded notably by scholars such as Moscati and Niemeyer around the 1970s (Ciasca 1997, 27; Karageorghis 2004, 86). The Louvre, on the other hand, was founded in the late 18th century and was already beginning to amass material from the Levantine coast in the 19th century (Bonnet 1991, 5). The museum did not wait for an academic definition to be established to call this region Phoenicia, and in fact, by starting to label this material as Phoenician, it actively participated in the discourse and dynamics of fabricating, modelling, and reinventing the concept of Phoenicia. I will expand later on the role played by the Louvre in the shaping

of this definition in the sphere dedicated to the making of Phoenician style and its role in the history of museum collections. For now, let us focus on the fact that by the time the current definition of the term 'Phoenician' reached a point of widespread establishment in the archaeological and museological world, the Louvre already had its own deeply anchored interpretation of it. Replacing or adapting this interpretative concept to match the now commonly accepted definition is an interminable procedure curbed by the previously detailed constraints but also by the non-contextuality of much of the material now called 'Phoenician' at the Louvre (and similarly at other museums, but we will come back to this concept of non-contextuality when discussing style). Given the way the term 'Phoenician' is defined, in a straightforward manner without any transcendence or ambiguity in the material, I suggest that the current academic definition was never really applied at the Louvre and that this long time span is partly the result of a long history of collecting and displaying this material. This is especially clear because the labelling and interpretation are currently being redone, but the dates remained unquestioned. In sum, the oddly long definition of the term 'Phoenician' at the Louvre is due to a combination of factors including the broadness and diversity of the collection, navigational constraints, and an older tradition in terms of time span.

In essence, the cue of definition highlights an interesting aspect of the interpretation of Phoenician collections in museums. Setting the time frame for the period is perhaps the most basic step, yet it is far from straightforward and it already begins to shed light on the intricacy of perceptions and the overlap between concepts creating complex layers of interpretation. I have chosen to illustrate this with the two extreme examples from the timeline (the Cyprus Museum and the Louvre) with both cases illustrating the networks between the academic atmosphere, the nature of the collection, and the context of the museum itself. However, every museum included on the timeline is also affected by these factors and many more in the construction of its definition of the Phoenician period. For instance, one could expect national museums to have the largest time spans as they are meant to represent the globality of the Phoenician period in a set country, yet this is not always the case. Even if we disregard instances of transcendence which could be misleading, only the National Museum of Beirut has a time span encompassing that of the other museum in the same country (the AUB Museum). In other instances - and Spain makes a particularly good case for this - the reason why the time span of the Phoenician period at the national museum is not comprised between the earliest and latest point of all other museums in the country is simply that the national museums in countries with many decentralised museums might not own enough material to match these dates because the material is at the local museums. Thus, the great variability in dates that we can clearly see on the timeline is explained by a system of connexions between different factors that overlap and vary in each museum. The focus in this chapter is to deconstruct these connexions and start to analyse each cue individually. The starting point of definition, answering how museums delimit the Phoenician period, testifies to the complexity of working with the Phoenician era. Museums not only have different ways

of expressing it in the labelling, but also specific socio-political and academic contexts as well as eclectic collections leading to different definitions of the Phoenician period.

Delineation

The next cue I will be discussing is delineation, meaning the geographical boundaries of the Phoenician world. Once more, these will vary between museums. However, unlike temporal definition, spatial delineation in museums is essentially dependent on a single factor: the provenance of the collections. In order to visualise this geographical extent, I created a map for each museum showing the location of the museum as well as the sites marking the provenance of the Phoenician material displayed in the museum (see Appendix 1). A number of the museums I visited had their own maps showing the location of key Phoenician sites. However, I compiled the maps based on the labelling of material in order to ensure a thorough and complete picture of the provenance of the material. The maps do not reflect the density of materials per site and all sites are represented by a circle of equal diameter regardless of how much material comes from a certain site. When the provenance is uncertain, it is symbolised by a square.

The delineation cue complements the previous one, as together they form a holistic ensemble to define Phoenician culture in both space and time. In addition, we have already seen that the origins of the collections often affect the temporal definition of the Phoenician period in museums. As a general rule, the more widespread the collection is, the further the temporal definition of the period will stretch. However, this does not always apply, and notable exceptions are site museums such as those of Idalion, Mozia, and Sant'Antioco. The stretch in these museums is comparable to that of their respective regional and national museums which is understandable given that the Phoenician phase in a certain region or country is relatively simultaneous at different sites of that region or country. It is the museums with a large international collection such as the Louvre, for instance, with many different sites and therefore chronologies, which end up with the longest time spans.

The definition cue is therefore interesting and informative in many ways, but it needs the delineation cue as support. Likewise, delineation on its own might not be a particularly telling cue, but its overlap with definition as well as some other cues (notably curatorial path) which we will encounter later is essential to an understanding of the dynamics of displays. Essentially, the delineation cue can be viewed as an expression of the scale of the museums, as the geographical distribution of Phoenician materials determines the extent of the collection in each museum. Based on this criterion, museums can therefore be divided into four categories:

- Site museums, where the majority of the material comes from the site/city where the museum is located and its surroundings
- Regional museums, where the majority of the material comes from the broader region surrounding the city where the museum is located

- National museums, where the material comes from various sites spread across the country where the museum is located
- International museums, where the material tends to come from outside the country where the museum is located (at least in the Phoenician case)

It is important to note that the provenance of the Phoenician materials is not the sole determinant of the scale of the museum (especially given that the dataset includes museums that have collections originating as far as Australia) but rather that the distribution of Phoenician collections expresses this scale quite well in most cases. A notable exception is the Museo Salinas of Palermo, but this is due to the fact that most of the museum was closed for renovations at the time of research, which means I was not able to generate a complete provenance map for it. The below table shows how the twenty museums which for the dataset fit within each category.

Site	**Regional**	**National**	**International**
Idalion Museum	AUB Museum	Beirut National Museum	Louvre
Museo Whitaker Mozia	Limassol Museum	Cyprus Museum	British Museum
Museo Bareca Sant'Antioco	Museo Lilibeo Marsala	Valletta	
	Bardo Museum	Museo Salinas Palermo	
	Museo Marongiu Cabras	Museo di Cagliari	
	Museo de Málaga	Museo Arqueológico Nacional	
	Museo de Cádiz		
	Museo Arqueológico de Sevilla		
	Museo de Huelva		

Table 5: Museums by category.

Regional and national museums constitute the overwhelming majority of sources, but this is not to be taken as an indicator that these types of museums are the main hosts for Phoenician collections as a whole. As previously mentioned, there are other international museums such as the Metropolitan Museum of Art which could have been part of the study but were excluded from the dataset for

practical and financial reasons. In fact, the sheer quantity of Phoenician and Punic material available at the Louvre testifies for the important role international museums play in the display and dissemination of these collections. Sites museums, on the other hand, are a little more difficult to come across. The only important site museums missing from this study are those that were closed for renovations at the time of research, such as the Paphos and Carthage museums. The limited number of site museums with important Phoenician collections is linked to the limited number of preserved Phoenician sites across the Mediterranean, as these are often reduced to fragmentary remains scattered under modern cities. Moreover, some well-preserved and visitable sites, such as Tharros for instance, do not have a site museum but rather have their artefacts distributed across different museums. Therefore, we can find a significant proportion of artefacts from Tharros in three categories of museums, from a regional museum in Cabras to a national one in Cagliari, and an international one at the British Museum in London. The challenge, and part of this project, therefore, becomes to understand the narratives created by each of these displays and the dynamics between them. This is something we will come back to in the discussion as well as while discussing other cues.

Site Museums

The category of site museums stands out from the other three because it is the only one that allows audiences to associate the material on display with its actual provenance. Visitors are therefore able to have a holistic experience involving both architecture and small finds. Of course, the artefacts are still taken out of their original contexts and placed inside display cases, but site museums allow them to be as close to those original contexts as possible. This can be particularly well observed in Mozia, which constitutes quite a unique experience of archaeological heritage. First of all, the fact that it is located on an island only accessible by ferry brings a dimension of purpose and intentionality with visitors. Contrary to large international museums where most people stumble upon collections (especially Phoenician ones), people make the journey to Mozia with the intention of interacting both with the site and the collections. The insularity of the site also favours the notion of clear boundaries, whereas in cities such as Cádiz or Marsala it can be more difficult to detect the different archaeological areas as well as the extent of the ancient occupation. The museums of Idalion and Sant'Antioco are also surrounded by a clearly delineated archaeological park, albeit it was not yet open to the public when I went to Idalion. In terms of interaction between site and museum, in Mozia, the museum building is the closest point to the ferry docking station. There is no clear suggestion to visit the museum or the site first, and visitors are free to choose to experience it in either order. However, the gallery which currently serves as an entrance to the museum is equipped with large maps and scale models of the islands, as well as with flyers providing an itinerary and information to visit the island. The museum therefore integrates the site into its displays, in terms of orienting the visitors but also of navigation within the museum. On the first level, it is organised according to the geographical

provenance of the collections on the site. The museum therefore has areas dedicated to the domestic quarters, the necropolis, or the tophet, which visitors can then locate and visit on the site itself. In addition, each area of the site is equipped with explanatory panels, which also help associate artefacts exhibited in the museums with the anatomy of the site as a whole. The Museo Whitaker of Mozia is, therefore, a particularly good example of the connectivity and interactions between artefacts and architectural archaeological structures in a specific location.

Regional Museums

Regional museums, on the other hand, have different challenges. First of all, there is quite a variation in terms of the extent of the region covered by the different museums. This is independent of scale, as some relatively small regional museums such as the AUB museum cover a rather large region with its collection originating from different areas of Lebanon but also Cyprus and Syria. Likewise, some larger regional museums such as the Museo Arqueológico de Sevilla have a more restricted coverage limited to the administrative area surrounding the museum. These types of district museums are often located in countries which follow a regional-based administrative division, including in the cultural sector, from Cyprus to Spain and Italy. However, as attested in Cyprus and Italy most notably, the existence of a regional museum in almost every area (not all of those were relevant to this particular project so they were not all included) does not exclude that of a site museum in this area or country. Because of this variability in terms of both size and distribution of their collection, regional museums cannot be grouped in the same way site museums do as they do not provide a unified experience. Each one of them has a unique way of interacting with its context and of interpreting the material in a certain way to make it resonate with that context. There are, therefore, many nuances in the labelling and organisation of regional museums and we are once again faced with an overlap of the different cues.

Moreover, if all site museums included in this study were mainly dedicated to the Phoenicians, this is not always the case for regional museums. In Cádiz, for example, the Phoenician gallery with the two anthropoid sarcophagus is indeed the highlight of the museum, even to the point that most major developments at the museum happened as a consequence of the discovery of each sarcophagus (López 2019, pers. comm.). The AUB Museum also dedicates an important section of its galleries to the Phoenicians, which we will come back to when discussing frequency and importance. In Cabras, on the other hand, it is the material from Monte Prama that draws most of the focus. As a consequence, this section of the museum has frequent guided tours, which means that other galleries (including the Phoenician one dedicated to Tharros) see an important concentration of interpretation expressed by large panels in order to help visitors contextualise the collections without guided tours or audio guides (Del Vais 2019, pers. comm.). The Bardo and Limassol museums are also cases where the Phoenician

collections are not the most important ones. Some regional museums such as that of Sevilla, Huelva, Málaga, or Marsala have a balanced ratio of Phoenician to non-Phoenician collections.

National Museums

Where regional museums have different ways of approaching the Phoenician material and placing it in context, national museums in different countries are all linked by a common thread: the Phoenician material is not the main part of the collection (where it definitely was in site museums and could be in regional museums). Even in national museums with a significant amount of Phoenician material, such as the national museum of Beirut or that of Cagliari, the nature of the museum as a national museum imposes a certain equilibrium that has to be achieved. Therefore, every national museum displaying Phoenician material has to integrate this material with the globality of the collection.

Of course, the way each museum tackles this issue will be different, and this can often be linked to the provenance of collections and their distance from the museum. If we look at the maps of the location of national museums in relation to the provenance of their Phoenician collections, two trends tend to emerge: 1) museums that are located more or less centrally on the map such as the Beirut National Museum, the Cyprus Museum, and the Valetta museum, and 2) museums located at a certain distance from their Phoenician collections. The most evident example of this category is the Museo Arqueológico Nacional in Madrid. It is in fact very clear from the map that the majority of its Phoenician collections come from Andalusia and the Balearic Islands, at quite a distance from the capital. The possibility of visitors engaging with both the artefacts and their archaeological contexts is therefore highly unlikely in this instance, and even in the case where they might see the sites in question before or after visiting the museum, these visits would still be quite spaced out in time. This museum is therefore presented with quite a challenge to reduce decontextualization as much as possible, bearing in mind that the mere presence of artefacts in a museum has already initiated this process (Jones 1992, 911; Conforti 1995). In addition to this, the nature of the Museo Arqueológico Nacional implies that (like all other national museums) it is not home exclusively to Phoenician collections. Moreover, out of all the national museums included in this study, it is the one with the largest surface area in terms of provenance of its collections given that it covers the entirety of Spain. Since, as we have just seen, Phoenician material is not found all across Spain, this means that there are contemporary cultural phenomena the museum also has to integrate within its displays. This is something other national museums such as the ones of Lebanon and Malta are not necessarily faced with to the same extent as the Phoenician phase is the dominant one around these countries (albeit there are some regional variabilities and nuances). The Museo Arqueológico Nacional therefore dedicates almost an entire floor to its Iron Age/Protohistory period, organized between the different cultural groups involved. The period is introduced by a mixed showcase featuring material from various sites across Spain in order to illustrate the country's diversity and multiplicity of interactions

at the time. This introductory showcase is the Museo Arqueológico Nacional's manner of bringing together its numerous Iron Age collections.

An interesting point of comparison can be done here with the Italian national museums of Palermo and Cagliari. Italy does not have one main large national museum bringing together a sample of highlights of collections from across the country. Instead, it has a series of national museums established in most regions, from Naples to Rome and Cagliari. In their nature, these are actually closer to regional museums, but because they claim to be national museums in their official names, and because of the existence of smaller regional Italian museums in the dataset, the museums of Palermo and Cagliari are in fact regarded as national museums. To understand this nuance, we can compare their distribution maps to those of the Museo Lilibeo in Marsala and the Museo Marongiu in Cabras. It becomes clear then that while the latter only exhibit material from the surrounding province, the museums of Cagliari and Palmero cover a much larger area (all of their respective islands). The map of the Museo Salinas of Palermo might be a little misleading in this regard because most of the Phoenician sites are concentrated in the Western part of Sicily, and because it was partially closed for renovation at the time of my visit which means that a significant amount of Phoenician material is missing from the maps.

Thus we can conclude, there are three types of national museums: those centrally located and whose collections cover the entire country (Malta, Lebanon, Cyprus); those excentered in relation to the Phoenician collections and whose collections cover the entire country (Spain); and finally those centrally located whose collections cover a specific area of a certain country (Italy).

International Museums

So far, we have seen that the relations between artefacts and their contexts tend to get more complex the more we move up in terms of museum scales. With national museums presenting multiple ways of managing their collections based on the different conditions the affect them, I will now move to international museums and their key challenges. When discussing national museums we addressed the integration of Phoenician collections (often not the main part of museums) into the wider collection. With international museums, this becomes even more relevant. People do not go to the Louvre or the British Museum with the intention of seeing Phoenician collections, despite the fact that they both host some of the most iconic objects associated with the Phoenicians, from the Nimrud ivories to the cippus of Malta and the sarcophagus of Eshmunazar. I am not arguing here that Phoenician collections should be exhibited in a way to become main highlights of these museums, but rather, I am interested in the place they take and the role they play within such institutions.

One thing that international museums have in common is the fact that they dissociate Phoenician from Cypriot material. However, the nature of this separation is not expressed in the same way. In both these museums, the Phoenician material belongs to the Near Eastern department (Oriental

Antiquities for the Louvre and Middle East for the British Museum). At the British Museum, however, the material from Cyprus belongs to the department of Greece and Rome, whereas it is part of Oriental Antiquities at the Louvre. The British Museum still shows a clear effort to relate relevant parts of the Cypriot display to the Phoenician material, despite the fact that it is part of a different department, linking it back to the Phoenician display in its labelling. At the Louvre, on the other hand, there is little reference to the Phoenicians in the labelling of Cypriot material. In terms of physical location within the museum, the Cypriot material is located relatively close but not directly adjacent to the Phoenician galleries at both the Louvre and the British Museum. The difference between both then is that the British Museum separates the Cypriot and Phoenician collections by departments but makes an attempt to link them via the labelling, whereas at the Louvre this separation is not departmental but physical. This is linked to many factors and cues which we will come back to, from collection restrictions to the setup and organisation of each of these museums.

More relevant to the discussion of delineation in international museums is the provenance of their collections and how this is reflected in the displays. In fact, we can note that the origins of the Phoenician material vary greatly between the two museums. While the Louvre has an extensive collection covering the Mediterranean from East to West, the overwhelming majority of the material on display at the British Museum comes from Tharros. In addition to a wider range, the Louvre also has a significantly higher amount of Phoenician material than the British Museum. This is reflected in the arrangement of this material in each of these museums. While the British Museum can concentrate most of its Phoenician collection in a single showcase (excluding the material from Cyprus and a few monumental objects such as stelae and sarcophagi), the Phoenician artefacts at the Louvre are spread across several galleries. Due to constraints linked to the architecture of the museum and some of the artefacts themselves, the galleries containing Phoenician material at the Louvre are not continuous, creating a disorienting feeling. At the British Museum, on the other hand, the Phoenician showcase and monumental objects are located within the Levantine galleries, except for a couple of stelae from Carthage on display in the staircase leading to these galleries. The compactness of the display at the British Museum therefore creates a more integrated experience of these collections within the broader context of the Near East in the face of the scattered phenomenon taking place at the Louvre. There, the Phoenician collections are grouped in galleries based on their provenance, with an important gallery focusing on the Levantine coast and Carthage leading to a smaller area linking together finds from the central and western Mediterranean and tying them to the Phoenician expansion.

We can, therefore, note that international museums, despite their seemingly similar nature and missions have entirely different approaches to the displays of their respective Phoenician collections notably due to the different scopes of these collections. This brings us back to the definition cue and helps explain why the Louvre covers such a large timespan. The extent of the Phoenician material at

the Louvre, from its earliest phases in the East to the persistence of Punic culture past the Roman conquest in the West results in a coverage spanning over a millennium.

In this segment, we have explored the delineation of Phoenician collections in museums. While the provenance of these collections in museums is as variable as their chronological definition, it is nonetheless less controversial. The combination of all provenance maps would generate a comprehensive (although probably not exhaustive) map of Phoenician sites. In other words, none of the museums call material coming from outside the traditionally defined area 'Phoenician', unlike with the temporal definitions which often transcends the official academic definition of the term. That being said, delineation is still a useful cue in that it helps visualise the position of the museum in relation to its collection and shows that this physical position has direct ascendance on the curatorial positions these museums adopt towards the Phoenician collections. Based on this, I divided the museums into four categories of scale, from site to international museums. Each of these categories has its own stakes and challenges, however, there are still variations within the categories. We were also able to start tracing the first overlaps between cues, with the Louvre providing a particularly good example of the provenance of the collections affecting the definition of the Phoenician period.

Frequency

Definition and delineation alone started pointing to the complex network of relationships between the different cues. This picture is only going to intensify as I discuss additional cues, but the collection of examples and patterns illustrating each cue will amount to a clarification of the overlaps between the various cues and reveal the full extent of this network. I will now move on to the next cue: frequency. Frequency represents the proportion of the term 'Phoenician' as it is used in the labelling of the various museums. I chose to focus on the terms 'Phoenician' and 'Punic' as opposed to 'Phoenicia' because of their qualitative implications. The term 'Phoenicia', on the other hand, is mostly used as a geographical definition which might not denote cultural attributes the way 'Phoenician' or 'Punic' does. This is well illustrated at the Louvre, where most labels use the term 'Phoenicia' to designate the provenance of the collections without necessarily ascribing Phoenician cultural traits to them.

Frequency is not a mere representation of the count of the instances of the term Phoenician in museum labelling. It is based on that, but it also incorporates two comparative elements. The first one is the relationship between artefacts and labelling, which is then reflected in the total appearances of the term 'Phoenician'. This translates into frequency as a ratio, and as a result, museums with little labelling tend to have lower frequency. The other element coming into play here is that frequency in one museum is relative to frequency in all other museums. This is quite important because the standards for measuring the frequency of the term 'Phoenician' are not set in an arbitrary vacuum, they exist because the term is used relatively often (or not) in all museums, hence the need to consider this cue. For this reason, and because the actual number of mentions of the term 'Phoenician' is

dependent on many other factors such as museum scale and size of the Phoenician collection I chose not to linger on numbers of mentions here but rather express this as three categories of frequency: high, medium or low. These categories are illustrated in the below chart (Figure 18). In sum, the category of frequency is determined by two factors: the count of mentions of the terms 'Phoenician' and 'Punic' in museums and the amount of labelling in each museum. It has been determined in a relative framework, meaning that the chart expresses a comparison in the context of this particular dataset.

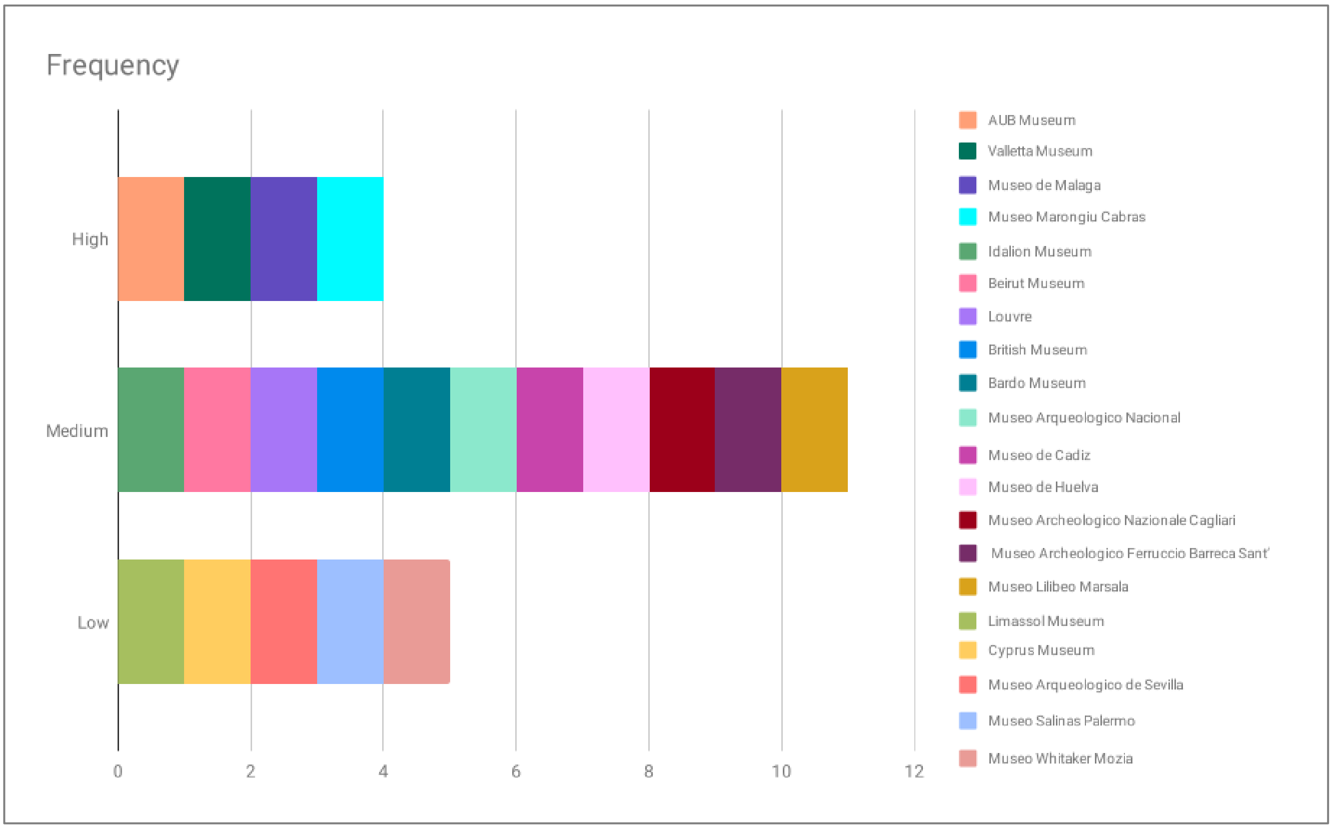


Figure 19: Frequency of mentions of the terms 'Phoenician' and 'Punic' by museum. Author's own.

However, before I move on to exploring each one of these frequency categories into more detail, a word about the stakes linked to this cue. In order to understand why it is important to discuss frequency, we should go back to the controversy surrounding the term 'Phoenician' and how it might be problematic. I have already discussed this in detail, and the key ideas to take out of this debate are as follows:

1. It is an external designation, therefore not really representative.
2. Phoenicians never called themselves Phoenicians as far as we know.
3. The difference between Phoenician and Punic is not semantic but rather academic and cultural.

4. The long history of use of the term combined with the existence of a unified language and important similarities in terms of material culture and settlement patterns, as well as the lack of a better term impose the continued use of the term 'Phoenician'.

Having established these premises, we can now move on to discussing the use of the term Phoenician in museums. This question of frequency was, in fact, one of the first to emerge during the design of this project. Given the controversy surrounding the term in both academia and popular culture, I was curious to see how museums employed it, starting with whether or not they made use of it at all. As expected, all the museums included in the dataset do indeed make use of the term 'Phoenician', with varying degrees of frequency. In fact, it would have been quite surprising to encounter museums with clear Phoenician collections which do not use the term at all, as it is such a deeply anchored designation. In terms of how the word 'Phoenician' is being used, the matter is slightly more complicated, and we will come back to it when discussing labelling and stereotypes.

Medium

For now, let us concentrate on the frequency of use. Most museums fall into the medium category, which expresses a balance between collections on display and use of the term 'Phoenician' in the labelling, especially when compared to the museums in the other two categories. This is therefore a straightforward and self-explanatory frequency I will not linger on unnecessarily. The only flag to note within this category is the presence of the Bardo museum, which despite not using the term 'Phoenician' very often, relies on words such as 'Punic' and 'Carthaginian' to describe its collection. Given the situation of the museum in Tunisia and the nature of its collections, this emphasis is natural, and therefore placing it in the low-frequency category would be misleading. To a lesser extent, this is also the case of other museums such as the Museo Arqueológico Nacional or the Museo Lilibeo of Marsala which present Phoenician as well as Punic phases. This is another reason why I have chosen to take into account the use of both 'Phoenician' and 'Punic' while establishing the frequency chart.

High

Let us now take a closer look at the category of high-frequency museums. It comprises four museums: the AUB Museum, the National Museum of Archaeology in Valletta, the Museo de Málaga and the Museo Marongiu of Cabras. These four museums share a common aspect in the fact that they all present quite extensive labelling compared to the material on display. The Valletta and Cabras museums in particular are quite unique in terms of the quantity of information they provide through large explanatory panels. This influx of text obviously raises the number of mentions of the term Phoenician. In addition, the Museo Marongiu also uses the terms 'Phoenician' and 'Punic' on individual object labels quite often, to refer to the general period. At the AUB museum, the term 'Phoenician' is also frequently found on individual labels, here clearly used as both a cultural and periodic designation. In fact, many of the showcases at the AUB museum include 'Phoenician' in their

titles, which contributes to raising the frequency. Finally, the Museo de Málaga presents an interesting case. It does not call single artefacts 'Phoenician' as often as some other museums and does not make particularly extensive use of large panels. Rather, it presents a balance of large panels, individual labelling, but also showcase or assemblage labelling. It is in this latter category that the term Phoenician is most often encountered at this museum, but the sum of all this interpretative text enhances the frequency. There are, therefore, different expressions of high frequency in the museums falling within this category, but they all have to do with the amount of labelling and interpretation at these museums. In later sections, I will further discuss how these interpretational choices affect other aspects of the perception, presentation, and display of Phoenician material, such as the importance these collections take within the museum as well as possible stereotypes associated with them.

Low

Moving on to low-frequency mentions, a category that includes five museums: the Limassol Museum, the Cyprus Museum, the Museo Arqueológico de Sevilla, the Museo Salinas of Palermo, and the Museo Whitaker of Mozia. The first interesting pattern to be noted here is that out of five museums, two are located in Cyprus and two in Sicily. The low frequency in Sicily, however, is a non-trend influenced by the partial closure of the Museo Salinas at the time of fieldwork. Since most of the Phoenician collections of this museum were not on display, it goes without saying that there will be little mention of this term on the labelling. The Museo Whitaker, on the other hand, is a more interesting case. Out of all the museums included in the dataset, it is one of the few whose collection is almost exclusively Phoenician, along with the other two site museums (Idalion and Sant'Antioco). I have already spoken at length about the insularity of Mozia, and how this creates a very particular experience. Something to add here would be that this insularity favours expectation and exclusivity, which likely contributes to the low number of appearances of the term Phoenician there. Visitors expect a Phoenician site and museum only, therefore they do not need to be frequently reminded of the Phoenician nature of the collections.

Here, a comparison can be done with the Idalion Museum, whose collection is also overwhelmingly Phoenician, and by that, I mean here without a Punic phase. In order to understand why the Idalion Museum has a higher frequency than the Whitaker and therefore falls into the medium category, we must go back to the remainder of the Cypriot museums, both of which are in the low category. One of the most important reasons why these have low frequencies is because they have relatively little labelling altogether. The current displays at both the Cyprus Museum and the Limassol Museum date back to the 1970s (Pilides 2019, pers. comm.; Violaris 2019, pers. comm.), and therefore reflect quite an obsolete labelling and interpretation policy. There are very few large panels, and even less showcase and object labels, so naturally, the term Phoenician is less present. In fact, (as discussed when treating definition) there are only two attested mentions of the term Phoenician at the Cyprus Museum: one

on a panel detailing the pottery chronologies and one on the label of an inscribed artefact. Meanwhile, the Idalion Museum was recently established (in 2007) and is therefore not faced with this issue (Satraki 2019, pers. comm.). However, the date of the displays does not suffice to explain the low frequency of mentions in Cypriot museums. An important point to consider is the political and academic climate, which tends to favour a strong sense of Greek identity within the Cypriot population. This proximity with Greece is not only reflected in popular Cypriot minds but also in the presentation of Cypriot cultural heritage. As an example, the Limassol Museum launched an exhibition on Amathus in 2016, which takes a relatively large space of the museum and is planned to stay on until the museum closes for renovation (at the time of research this was planned for the end of 2019). I therefore included the exhibition in my project, especially since it presents an interesting contrast to the remainder of the museum. It is indeed quite contemporary, has a lot of interpretation, and is organised based on themes rather than a more traditional grouping of material. However, despite the clarity of the exhibition and the rigorous labelling, the term 'Phoenician' remains a rarity. This is due to the fact that the curator was especially careful in using this term due to the academic debate surrounding it and the fact that Amathus cannot be considered a Phoenician site properly speaking (Violaris 2019, pers. comm.). Therefore, it is only the sites such as Idalion, with undeniable Phoenician presence as attested by the important archive found there, which use the term 'Phoenician' with more freedom in Cyprus.

Finally, the last museum with low frequency is the Museo Arqueológico de Sevilla. In a sense, it presents a similar case to Cyprus by staying away from the use of the term 'Phoenician' altogether. Instead, it tends to prefer the use of 'Tartessos' to refer to the period in question. However, unlike in Cyprus, the principal cause of this shift away from the term 'Phoenician' is not linked to socio-cultural concerns and identifications, but rather to the nature of the archaeological evidence. While the Andalusian coast presents clear evidence for material of a distinguishably Phoenician nature (or at least something markedly different from the indigenous material), the Museo Arqueológico de Sevilla's collections originate further away from the coast, as illustrated by its distribution map. The result of this is much more ambiguous material, making the distinction between Phoenician and indigenous a lot more difficult in this case. The denomination of 'Tartessos' is therefore used to mark the unique phenomenon taking place in the region at this time. It is worth noting here that the national museum of Spain also dedicates a few showcases to Tartessos, distinguishing them from the Phoenician material yet acknowledging the relationships between them (especially given the fact that the Tartessos and the Phoenician showcases are facing each other). The low frequency of use of the word Phoenician in the Museo Arqueológico de Sevilla is therefore linked to the lower frequency of Phoenician material in the region relative to the coastal sites.

With low-frequency museums, we have once again encountered a wide variety of unfoldings and overlaps, some having to do with the amount of labelling, some with curatorial concerns fuelled by a

specific socio-political climate, and some with the nature of the collections themselves. While the analysis of frequency may seem straightforward, it remains a key steppingstone which will lead forward to more complex matters. Additionally, it was important to lay out this cue and visualise it because, unlike temporal definition for example, it is not one that is apparent in museums at first sight.

Importance

The apparent factor when visiting museums is, in fact, the physical and ideological space occupied by the Phoenician collections in each museum, translated here into the cue of importance. Importance is linked to frequency in more than one way, but it is a separate cue which reflects how much the Phoenician collections have a role to play within the wider context of the museum, unrelated to the count of mentions. We have started to touch upon this when discussing spatial delineation, in particular with museum scales. As a general trend, international museums tend to have the least focus on Phoenician material whereas it takes the most space in site museums. However, the picture is not simply determined by scale. Before I move on further, a note on the nature of this cue. Unlike frequency or scale, importance is a much more instinctive cue. It is quantifiable (to an extent) by mapping the physical space occupied by the Phoenician collections in comparison to the total space of the museum. However, this mapping can be controversial in two main ways. First, there is the fact that I was not able to obtain a plan of all the museums in the dataset, notably for security reasons (in Tunis for example). Second, the collections can sometimes be quite spread out, or on the contrary quite concentrated in one area, leading to the formation of bias on the mapping. For instance, a showcase containing 5 artefacts occupies much less space than 5 sarcophagi, but it remains the same quantity of material. This comes into play for example at the national museum of Beirut, which is mainly organised by categories of objects, with the monumental pieces on the ground floor and the small finds on the first floor. As a result, there are Phoenician artefacts spread across the museum. If mapped, this would falsely lead to a belief that this museum accords high importance to the Phoenician collections, when in fact it is the setup of the galleries which creates this image. We will come back to the idea of museum organisation with further examples in due time.

This example brings us back to a key concept of importance: the fact that it is not only determined by the physical space Phoenician collections occupy but also (and perhaps more importantly) the ideological one. Going back to the Beirut National Museum, we already saw that Phoenician collections take up quite a significant portion of the physical space over all three floors of the museum. However, when visiting the museum, one does not feel an overwhelming presence of Phoenician collections. This is a key part of the importance cue, and the one that makes it most difficult to quantify: the intuitive factor outlined by the feel the collection generates. In the case of the Beirut National Museum, it is helped by the medium frequency of the term 'Phoenician' on labelling. Adding

to this, the museum refers to this period as the Iron Age rather than the Phoenician period, which limits the emphasis on the Phoenicians as a major cultural phenomenon and places it on par with other phases of the Lebanese history from the Neolithic to Roman and Islamic times.

Interestingly, this approach is not the same in all the museums of the country. The AUB Museum dedicates an important section to Phoenician material, both spatially and ideologically. In fact, the chronological flow of the museum is interrupted in the Phoenician section by some four showcases dedicated solely to this culture, bearing in mind that Phoenician material is also present in many other showcases throughout the museum. There is, therefore, a definite emphasis put by the AUB Museum on its Phoenician collections, which are displayed as one of the main focal points of the museum, as illustrated by their location in its centre. It is therefore interesting how two museums in the same country, and even city, are entirely different when it comes to the balance of Phoenician collections.

Another interesting example when it comes to museums giving high importance to the Phoenician collections can be found in the Museo de Cádiz. There, the Phoenician section is clearly marketed as one of the main highlights, and for justifiable reasons. In fact, the museum of Cádiz is host to the only anthropoid sarcophagi found in the Iberian Peninsula to this day. These two artefacts take central stage in the Phoenician gallery, which is entirely organised around them. In fact, even the major redevelopments of the museum were triggered by the discoveries of each sarcophagus (Lopez 2019, pers. comm.). In terms of spatial use, however, it is a more concentrated one than at the AUB museum, with all the Phoenician collections grouped in one gallery, relatively equal in size to the other galleries of the museum. The emphasis given to the Phoenician material in Cádiz is therefore vehicled through other means than spatial occupation, notably in the museum's communication material. This is very clear in the brochure of the museum, which states that "it is Room II, devoted to the colonisations, particularly that of the Phoenicians, that contains the museum's most spectacular collection". It then moves on to briefly discussing the sarcophagi before adding that "the rest of the room is also interesting". This emphasis is also highlighted by the fact that several school visits spent quite some time in the Phoenician gallery while I was collecting data. The Museo de Cádiz presents an interesting contrast to the AUB Museum because they both put emphasis on their Phoenician collection, but where the Cádiz museum focuses most of this emphasis on a pair of anthropoid sarcophagi, the AUB Museum does not single out any particular highlight objects. It is quite interesting because these are the two museums within the dataset which place the most importance on their Phoenician material - excluding site museums which have too little non-Phoenician material in order to provide interesting comparison grounds - but they do it in very different ways.

In addition, if we go back to the frequency chart (Figure 18), we can see that they fall within different categories, with the Cádiz museum exhibiting medium frequency where the AUB museum has one of the highest frequencies. This difference can partly be explained by the fact that the importance given to the Phoenicians in Cádiz is mainly funnelled on two objects, whereas at the AUB museum it involves

a much larger number of artefacts. In terms of usage of the term 'Phoenician', this means that the Cádiz museum does not need to repeat it constantly on a large number of labels the way the AUB museum does. This is precisely where we can draw the line between frequency and importance. These two cues are tightly linked together because they are both concerned with the perceived Phoenician element in the museum. However, they must not be confused. As we have already demonstrated, frequency is mostly concerned with the instances of the term 'Phoenician' on labelling and importance with the presence these collections impose within the museums. Therefore, a museum which exhibits high frequency on labelling might be expected to fall within the high importance category, but this is not necessarily the case. In fact, the AUB Museum is the only high-frequency museum that gives this degree of importance to its Phoenician collections.

To explore this division further, we can look at the differences between the AUB Museum and the National Museum of Archaeology of Valletta, which also falls into the high-frequency category. Both these museums also have quite a significant amount of labelling, yet experiencing Phoenician collections differs greatly from one to the other. I will not repeat how these are enhanced at the AUB Museum, but I will add that this highlight is done within a relatively open plan. In Valletta, on the other hand, the Phoenician gallery is in a separate room (as are collections related to other periods). There is, therefore, no mistaking about the function of this part of the museum, yet this section is not prevalent compared to others, as it can be at the AUB museum. It is treated as its own entity and clearly incorporated into the broader narrative without overpowering other periods.

This is, therefore, the key difference between frequency and importance, with the factor of perception playing a much bigger part when it comes to importance. In this case, we are not referring to museological perceptions flowing into interpretation and labelling, but rather to the audience's perception of the presence of Phoenician collections within the museums. Of course, this importance is directly given by the museums so that audiences can experience it in a certain way, but it is not necessarily achieved through the abundant use of the term Phoenician on labelling. In fact, a museum with high frequency can have low importance and vice versa.

The interesting trend to take out of importance is that out of twenty museums, only two really stand out in terms of the place Phoenician collections take there. On a broad level, this is quite telling. It shows that Phoenician collections are rarely prioritised, especially when compared to other ancient cultures such as Etruscan or Egyptian ones for instance (while acknowledging, of course, that Egyptian material is much more prevalent than Phoenician one). This can probably be traced back to the history of Phoenician archaeology, and we will explore those links further in the final chapters.

The fact that the two museums that place importance on their Phoenician collections are in Beirut and Cádiz is also rather significant. These two localities, at either end of the Phoenician realm, have a strong symbolic and archaeological value when it comes to this period. In fact, the Phoenician phase is seen as a key one in the history of both the Lebanese and the Andalusian coasts, with lasting impact

in popular minds to this day. Another key location where we could expect the museum to place some importance in its Phoenician section is Tunis, but because of the temporary closure of the Carthage museum and the focus of the Bardo museum on tiles and mosaics, I cannot currently confirm this trend.

However, despite the fact that this insistence on the Phoenicians is found in important museums of Beirut and Cádiz, it is quite clear that this is not the national trend. By that I mean not only that it is not a uniform phenomenon happening in all concerned Lebanese and Spanish museums, but more importantly that neither national museum privileges the Phoenician collection over others. This shows that despite local (in the case of Andalusia) or national (in Lebanon) enthusiasm for and popular identifications with the Phoenicians, there is no centralised national policy fuelling this emphasis. Understandably in Spain, it is only a fraction of the national territory that is even concerned by Phoenician occupation. This is not to take away from the importance of this period on a national level given the deep changes it brought with it, but it would be surprising to find it highlighted at the expense of other cultures in the national museums. In Lebanon, the association with the Phoenicians is generally more widely vocalised, so it is significant that the national institutions are not promoting it further. This choice is explained partly by a will to put all cultures that have formed the Lebanese past on an equal footing and partly by an intention to stir away from the dividing connotations coming from the fact that it is mostly Lebanese Christians who identify with the Phoenicians as a rejection of their Arab identity.

Curatorial Path

I will return to all these matters in the discussion, but for now, let us come back to quantifiable patterns. Next in line is curatorial path, which expresses the way in which the different museums are organised. Museums vary in terms of the complexity of their layouts, but it can usually be broken down into two or three levels, sometimes with overlapping attributes. Curatorial path is another perceived cue, as it is not officialised in the communication of the museums but experienced by the visitor. Yet, at the same time, it is nevertheless an intentional division determined by the museum to create specific navigation throughout. This navigation can be more or less restrained, with some museums orienting their visitors in a certain predefined path while others opt for a freer form of navigation. This curatorial path is often guided by other factors such as the scale of the museum, architectural or collections constraints, and of course curatorial choices.

I have created charts showing the path of each museum in the study, which I will come back to individually. In terms of levels, they divide rather evenly, with twelve museums organised around two basic levels and eight organised around three basic levels. The degree of complexity and parallel structures can often overlap, creating the sensation of more levels. Before moving on to developing the discussion with concrete cases, I will explain the different manners in which museums chose to

structure themselves and organise their collections. In this project, I have determined five main divisions, but these are by no means official or exhaustive.

1. Chronological: A chronological division is one in which the museum organises its collections in order of date.
2. Categories: This division is used in the cases of museums which separate between the different types of collections or materials they own, for example, artistic versus archaeological or monumental pieces versus small finds.
3. Regional: A regional division is one in which the collections are organised based on their provenance (by country, site, or area of a site).
4. Thematic: This is perhaps the most complex division, as it comprises a broad range of possibilities, but it essentially expresses a division based on themes set by the museum, for example, religion, daily life, or craftsmanship.
5. Materials: This expresses a division based on the materials artefacts are made of, often reflecting traditional archaeological divisions (for example pottery, metal, or glass).

The levels at which these parameters are distributed can be seen on two to three scales, depending on the museums. The first and broadest one is at the level of the entire museum, the second is usually concerned by specific spaces within the museums such as floors or galleries, and the third is based on the showcases or areas within galleries. As illustrated by the chart below, we can clearly see that the different categories of divisions are distributed into different levels in a specific way (Figure 19). For

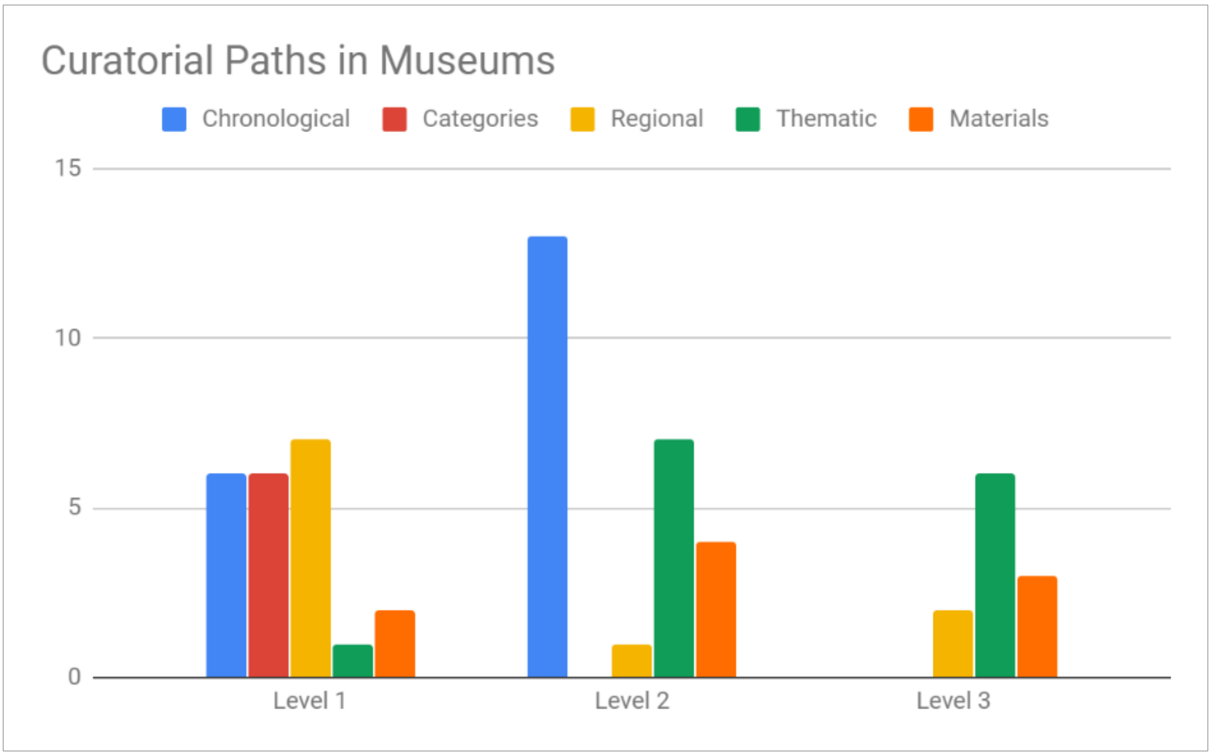


Figure 20: Curatorial path statistics, level 1 being the broadest. Author's own.

instance, chronological division always takes place at the first or second level, which means that museums with three levels never set this division within their showcases. The showcases can therefore be ordered chronologically within a gallery but the material inside the showcases is not ordered in that way. In terms of museums that split their collections based on categories, this invariably happens at the first level (the one of the museum itself). When it comes to regional, thematic or materials divisions, however, these could be encountered at any level although it is more common to find a regional division at the first level and a thematic division at the lowest level, usually the second or third.

It is worth noting that the second and third levels are based only on the Phoenician sections of museums (when they exist), therefore this data should not be taken as representative of the entire structure of the museum apart from level 1 since it is concerned with the main division of the museum. I chose to isolate the Phoenician material at the lower levels in order to simplify the visualisation of the data and to filter parasite information that would not be directly relevant to this thesis. This is especially valid for large complex museums, and while it would be interesting to compare the structure of Phoenician galleries with that of others within those museums, this goes beyond the scope of this project.

Two-level structures

I can now start looking at some specific curatorial paths in more detail, beginning with the simplest two-level structures. Seven museums consist of just two main levels, and although the basic form is similar in all of them, the attributes according to which they are set up are variable. The museums of Cabras and Palermo both adopt a regional followed by a chronological division (Figure 20). This is a

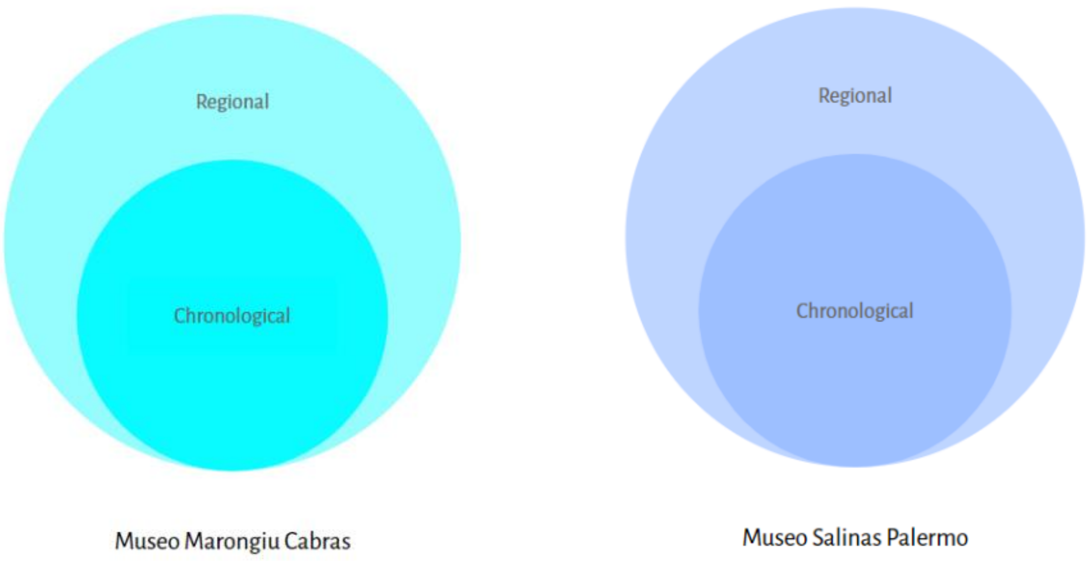


Figure 21: Curatorial path at the museums of Cabras and Palermo. Author's own.

relatively simple structure, but in Palermo, this perception is likely hindered by the partial closure of the museum. The Museo Arqueológico Nacional and the National Museum of Malta in Valletta are organised chronologically on a first level with their showcases arranged by theme (Figure 21). The

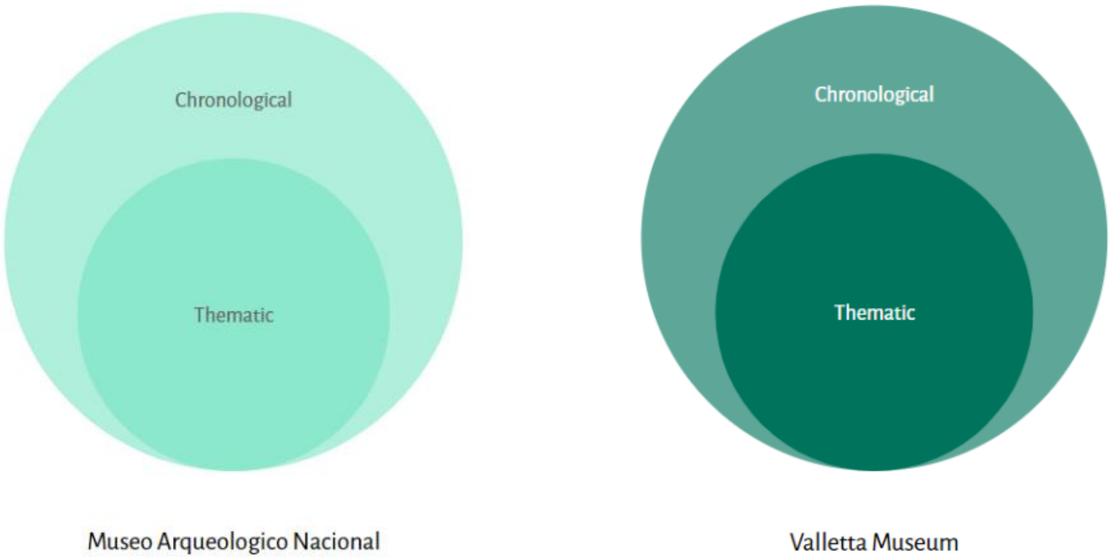


Figure 22: Curatorial paths at the Museo Arqueológico Nacional and the Valletta Museum. Author's own.

thematic showcase division is quite a common trend in museums with relatively recent displays, stirring away from more traditional divisions such as ones based on materials, and this is illustrated by these two museums. On the opposite end of the spectrum, the Cyprus and Limassol museums, with their older displays, have a structure based on materials then date (Figure 22). Finally, the Idalion museum presents a case of the reverse phenomenon, as it separates by chronology at the broader levels

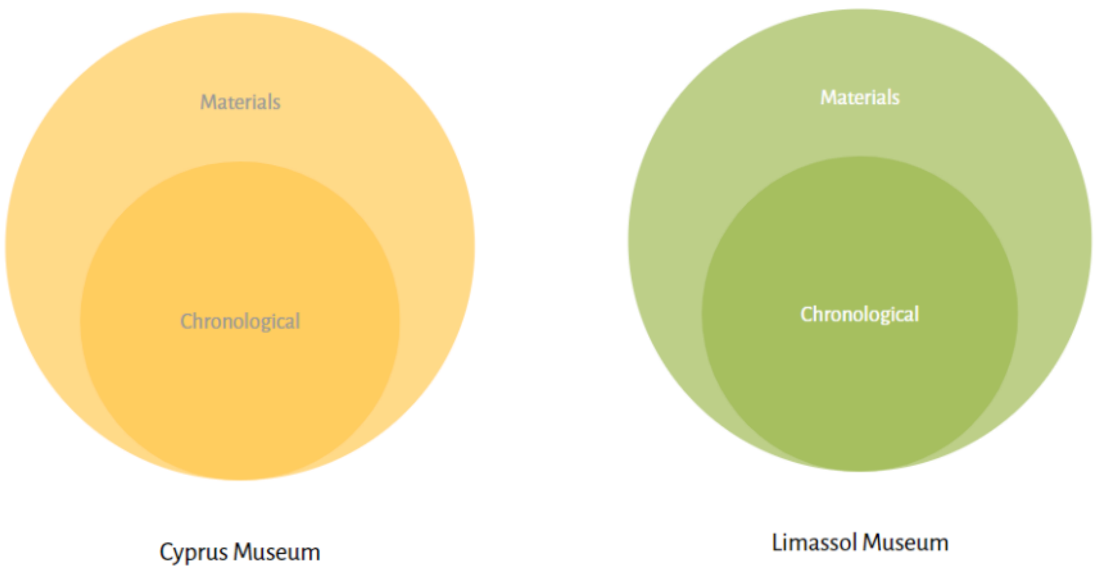


Figure 23: Curatorial paths at the Cyprus and Limassol museums. Author's own.

and by materials at the showcase level (Figure 23). It is quite interesting that these attributes are adopted by all three Cypriot museums, reflecting a similar way of managing their collections. Another notable fact with two-level museums is that the simplicity of division is not necessarily linked to the scale of the museum, as one could expect. In fact, four national museums, among which one of the largest in this study, the Museo Arqueológico Nacional adopt this type of structure. All these museums also have the chronological attribute in common, showing that it is indissociable from a very straightforward organisation. In fact, eighteen out of twenty museums integrate a chronological aspect at a certain level.

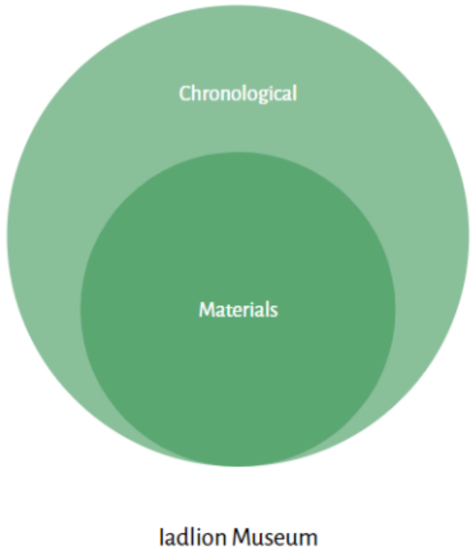
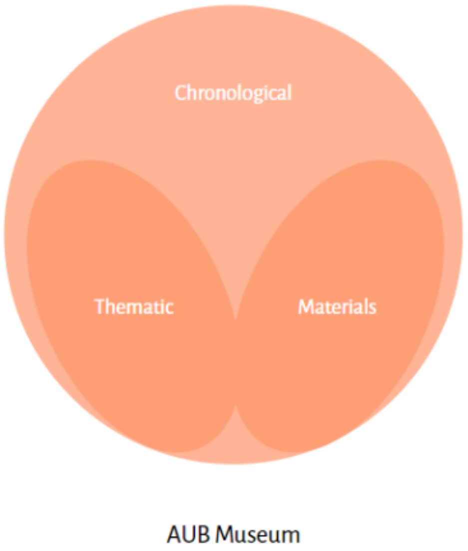


Figure 24: Curatorial path at the Idalion Museum. Author's own.

The other four museums with a two-level organisation all share the same basic structure. This consists of a unified first division at the scale of the museum, but a divided second section at the scale of the showcases. In other words, this type of museum can follow a global path in the broad sense, but its showcases are divided according to different parameters running in parallel. The four museums with this organisation are the AUB Museum, the Bardo Museum, the Museo Arqueológico de Sevilla, and the Museo Barreca Sant'Antioco. They all have the thematic parameter in common at the second level. This option for dividing is actually the second most popular one, adopted by fourteen out of twenty museums. The way it is utilised in these four museums along with another parameter suggests an intention for added depth of information in comparison to basic two-level museums without adding too much structural complexity that might interfere with the navigation of the museum.

Out of these four museums, two share the exact same structure: the AUB Museum and the Museo Arqueológico de Sevilla (Figure 24). They follow a chronological division at the level of the museum, and their showcases are then distributed between thematic and materials-based ones. This is particularly obvious at the AUB Museum, where the thematic element really comes into play in the Phoenician area of the museum. In this case, it is almost as if the regular organisation based on chronology and then materials were interrupted on purpose to integrate thematic elements in the Phoenician section. In Sevilla, although the organisation is the same, the experience is quite different, with a more even balance between thematic and material showcases.



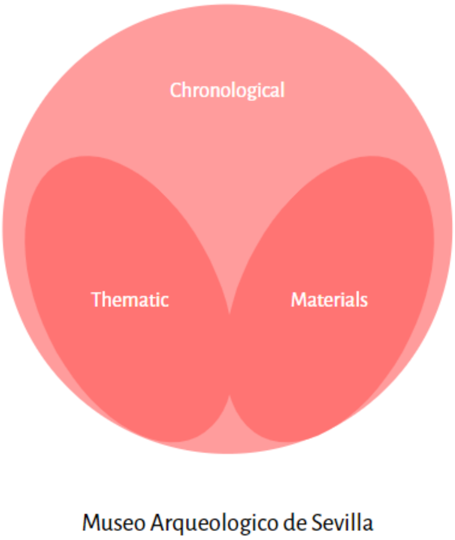


Figure 25: Curatorial paths in the AUB Museum and the Museo Arqueológico de Sevilla. Author's own.

The Museo Barreca is an interesting case within the group (Figure 25). As a site museum, its first division is still regional as it separates between the different areas of the city such as the inhabited zone, the necropolis and the tophet. This can seem rather unconventional since one could expect different parameters than the geographical one for a museum whose collections all originate from the same site, but it allows a contextual projection of the different sectors and how they functioned. At the next level, it adopts a parallel chronological and thematic organisation. Despite these divisions, the nature of the Museo Barreca as a site museum allows it to preserve important contextual information, particularly in the necropolis section which refers exactly to which tombs artefacts came from. It is, therefore, a good example of a museum using its structural division to optimise contextuality. Finally, the Bardo Museum in Tunis is one of the two museums that do not adopt the chronological parameter in their curatorial path (Figure 26). That is not to say that the chronological element is disregarded in the displays, but it is not expressed directly into the setup of the museum in a linear way. Some galleries are dedicated to certain periods, but they are not arranged in a chronological continuum. Because the Bardo Museum is host to an extensive collection of mosaics and tiles as well as artefacts from various sites in Tunisia, the first division is made at the level of

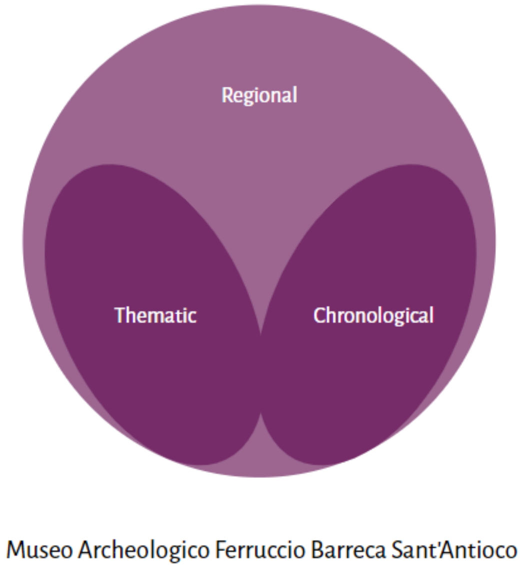


Figure 26: Curatorial path at the Sant'Antioco museum. Author's own.

categories, with the monumental mosaics separated from the smaller artefacts. The Phoenician material is only concerned by the latter category, and it is distributed based on materials or themes. Concretely, this means that there are galleries reserved for mosaics and others which present a more eclectic mixture of artefacts. Within these, some are exclusively dedicated to the Phoenician and Punic cultures (for example the one referred to as the Punic room) and others dedicated to various assemblages of which some material is Phoenician (for example the Carthage gallery or the treasure room). This example illustrates the challenges of eclectic and varied collections, which further complicate the curatorial path by adding a layer of separation by categories to an already complex museum set up in a complex building.

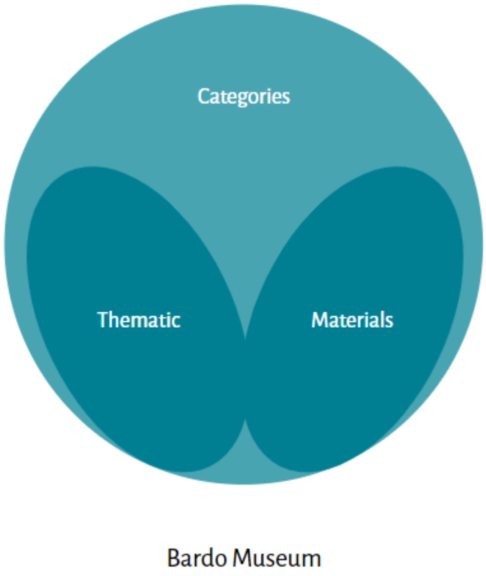


Figure 27: Curatorial path at the Bardo Museum. Author's own.

The Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Cagliari, the last museum with a two-level organisation stands out by its unique structure (Figure 27). It is, in fact, the only museum with divisions running in parallel at both its levels. At the first stage, the three floors of the museum are organised differently. The ground floor is dedicated to providing a general overview of the history and archaeology of Sardinia, and it is organised chronologically and then by themes. The upper floors, on the other hand, present more detailed displays of certain sites and the material there is, as a result, ordered by site first and chronology within each site. This particular structure makes the Museo Archeologico Nazionale the only one in the dataset which adopts a chronological division at more than a single level. It is an interesting approach because it allows visitors to relate the regional collections of the upper floors with the temporal periods addressed on the ground floor. This creates a binder tying the narrative of the museum together despite the fact that it is divided into two segments at the first level.

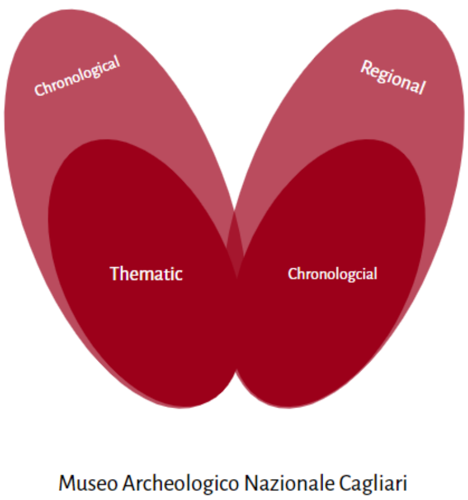


Figure 28: Curatorial path at the Cagliari museum. Author's own.

Museums with parallel divisions, therefore, provide an added dimension in comparison to simple two-level museums, but this comes hand in hand with the challenge of keeping a coherent

narrative despite using different ways of organising the collections. The various museums adopting this structure have their individual ways of creating those narratives and they all generate entirely different experiences, as opposed to simple two-level museums which are all linked to a more direct approach leading to a straightforward visit.

Three-level structures

Museums with a three-level division can also be divided between the ones with simple versus the ones with more complex structures. In this case, though, the museums with simple structures form a minority and are only represented by three examples: the Museo de Cádiz, the Museo Lilibeo of Marsala, and the Museo Whitaker of Mozia.

In Cádiz, the museum owns both an artistic and an archaeological collection, resulting in a first division based on categories (Figure 28). The ground floor is devoted to archaeology while the first floor hosts the art collection. Within the archaeological section, the galleries are arranged chronologically, and within the Phoenician gallery, the material is organised thematically with three main focuses on urban zones, necropolises, and sanctuaries (Sánchez 2019, pers. comm.). In this case, these are considered thematic rather than geographical parameters because the collection encompasses material from several sites of different nature, as opposed to a site museum where there would be one sacred area, urban area, and necropolis.

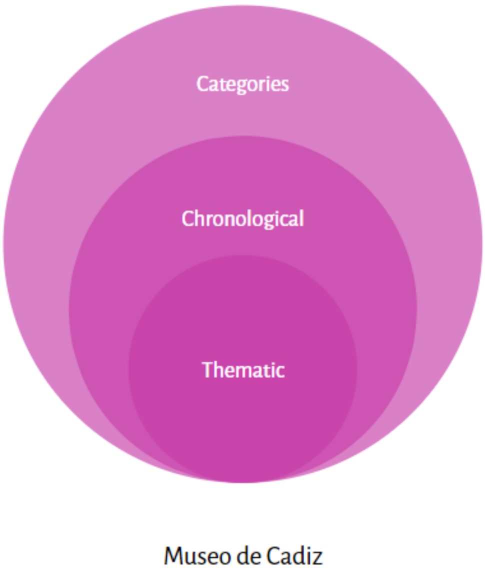


Figure 29: Curatorial path at the Cádiz museum. Author's own.

The Marsala museum adopts a similar structure at the second and third levels, organising its material by chronology then theme (Figure 29). However, because its collection is purely archaeological, the first division is done at the regional level instead of categories. It might, in fact, be the most obvious example of a geographical division, as one half of the museum is dedicated to sites on land while the other hosts the remains from two shipwrecks: the Punic

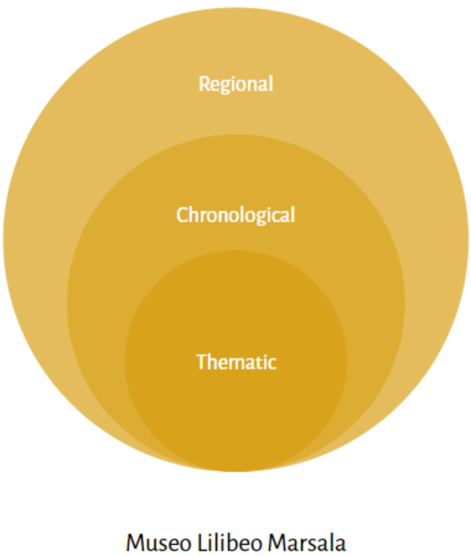


Figure 30: Curatorial path at the Marsala museum. Author's own.

shipwreck from Marsala and the Roman shipwreck from Marausa. The regional structure is also pursued in the land section, with two showcases dedicated to Mozia and Birgi in the first smaller gallery while the majority of the museum focuses on the site of Marsala itself. The duality of the museum is therefore masked by its simple looking curatorial path, yet it remains a very straightforward museum to navigate while understanding a clear narrative.

Finally, when it comes to Mozia, the first two divisions are the same as in Marsala (Figure 30). We start with a geographical one distinguishing the domestic zone, the industrial area, the necropolis, and the tophet; before moving on to chronological order. The artefacts themselves are then grouped by material, and this is especially clear in the tophet section which separates the stelae from the pottery and the terracottas. Once again, we find that the threefold curatorial path of the museum is not determined by its scale. Rather, it is driven by the collection which dictates the narrative and spatial organisation in which it would best be expressed.

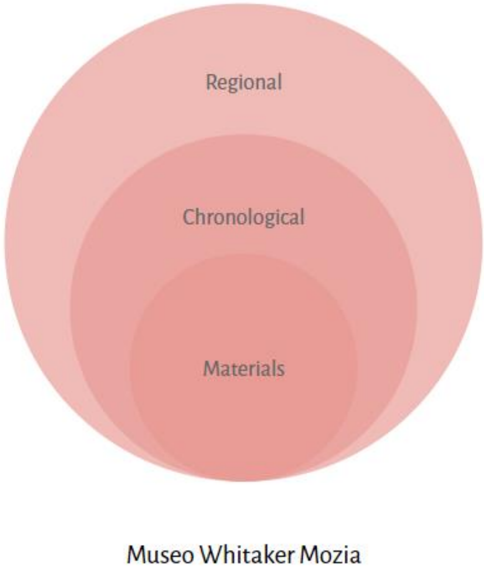


Figure 31: Curatorial path at the Mozia museum. Author's own.

Proving this point further are four museums with a three-level basic structure but which share a parallel structure within their showcases. The two international museums fall within this group, but their respective divisions are based on entirely different parameters. The British Museum groups its collections by region first (Figure 31). The galleries are then organised chronologically, and the showcases can be based on materials or themes. For example, the artefacts inside the Phoenician showcase are segmented based on materials and the Cypriot showcases are organised by theme. This shows that there is no unified policy between the different departments and that similar material can be treated and interpreted in more than one way within the same museum.

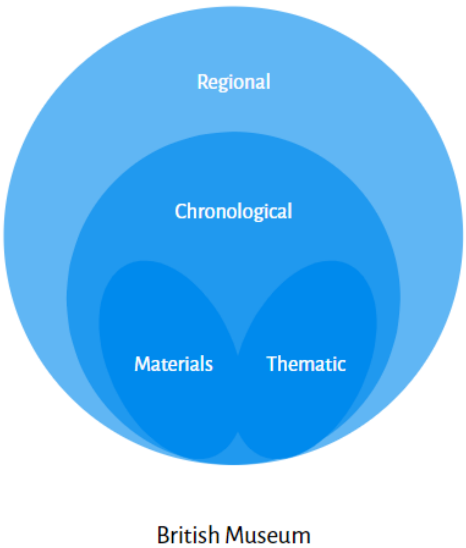


Figure 32: Curatorial path at the British Museum. Author's own.

At the Louvre, the showcases are also organised by materials or theme, with some focusing on stelae and others on funerary practices etc… (Figure 32). However, the collections are first and foremost

divided by category, and the galleries are then organised geographically. Here again, the chronological parameter is not directly expressed in the structure of the museum, but it is implied in the regional division. This then impacts the temporal definition cue since the late material from the Levantine coast is included as part of the Phoenician galleries. In theory, all the galleries comprising the Phoenician section of the Louvre could, therefore, include material dated between 1200 BCE and 200 CE in no particular order.

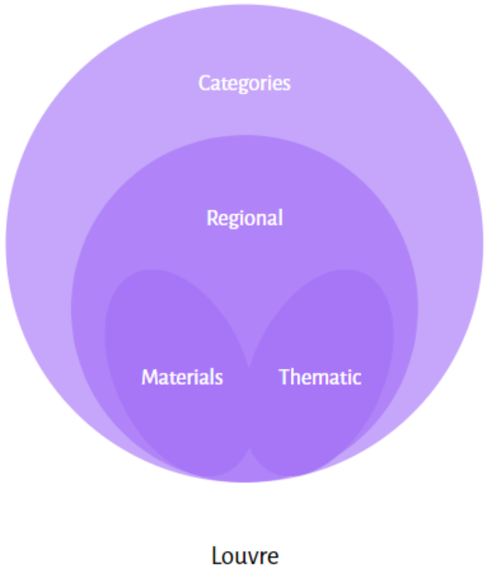


Figure 33: Curatorial path at the Louvre. Author's own.

The last two museums adopting a curatorial path with three levels including a third parallel one share the exact same parameters on which their structure is based. These are the Museo de Málaga and the Museo de Huelva (Figure 33). Just like the Louvre, these two museums have an artistic as well as an archaeological collection, which results in a first division by category. In fact, there is no exception to this rule, as all museums that are not exclusively archaeological adopt a first division based on categories regardless of the complexity of their structure or the number of levels they adopt in their chronological path. Within their archaeological sections, the material is ordered chronologically and then arranged by themes or regions. In Huelva, for example, there are showcases dedicated to language or craftsmanship side to side with showcases focusing on the necropolis of La Joya. In Málaga, the same showcases often merge both regional and thematic elements together as illustrated by the section dedicated to interactions between Phoenicians and locals, which focuses on a thematic element but

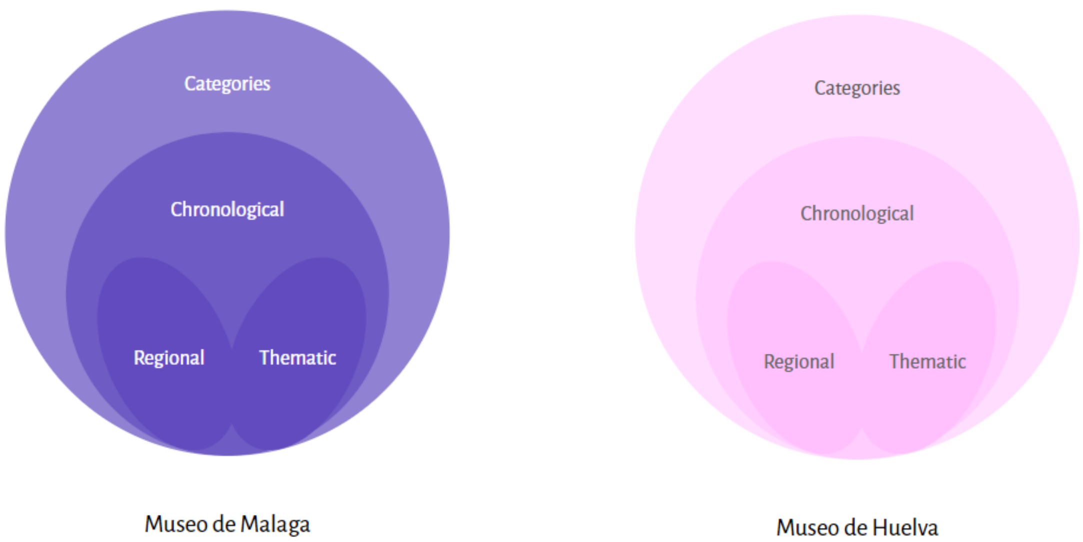


Figure 34: Curatorial paths at the museums of Málaga and Huelva. Author's own.

presents material grouped by site. The Málaga and Huelva museums are much less complex than the Louvre and the British Museum in terms of scale and even distribution of the Phoenician material, yet they adopt a similar curatorial path.

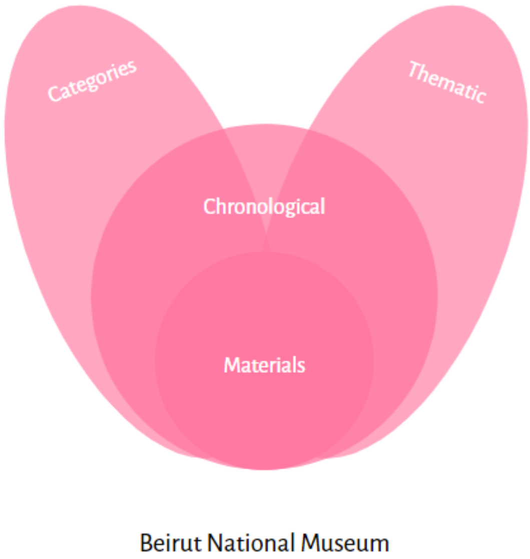


Figure 35: Curatorial path at the Beirut national museum. Author's own.

It is often the case that having to divide between art and archaeology imposes a third level to the structural organisation of the museum, but we saw with Marsala and Mozia that this is not always the determining factor. The national museum of Beirut, the last museum with a three-level curatorial path uses the division by categories (Figure 34). However, it does so in a very different way from the other museums that adopt this parameter. First of all, it has a parallel division at the first level instead of the last one like most other museums, making it more similar in structure to the national museum of Cagliari. However, the parameters used to order the collection are different in both museums. In Beirut, the category division is used, but instead of separating art from archaeology, it separates monumental objects from small finds. The ground floor of the museum is therefore reserved for large artefacts such as sarcophagi, stelae, and statues while the first floor hosts showcases containing pottery, ivories, jewellery… The recently opened lower ground floor of the museum, on the other hand, is dedicated to funerary practices across history. As a consequence, the initial division at the first level which was originally only based on categories now includes a thematic element. The curatorial path of the museum unifies again at the second and third levels which are based on chronology and materials, respectively. This is important because it preserves a guiding thread visitors can follow in the entire museum. While on the ground floor the monumental objects are not placed within showcases (and we can therefore not really talk about a third level material organisation here), the galleries flowing in the same chronological order and the artefacts in material-based showcases on the first and lower ground floors echo each other throughout the museum despite the difference in organisation at the first level.

The curatorial path cue is therefore interesting in terms of determining the space occupied by the Phoenician collections within each museum, as the structure will affect the distribution of the objects. For example, a museum with a first (or second in the case of mixed art and archaeology museums) level division based on chronology, such as the national museum of Valletta or the Museo de Málaga is more likely to have its Phoenician material concentrated in a specific space. On the other hand, museums with more complex first-level divisions such as the national museums of Beirut or Cagliari

tend to have Phoenician artefacts spread across the building. This brings us back to the idea of overlap between cues, notably with importance and shows that the space this material occupies is mainly determined by the curatorial path the museum follows rather than by the emphasis the museum places on it. Examining curatorial paths has also shown that there are no links between the scale of institutions and their structural organisation. With some rare exceptions such as the museums of Málaga and Cádiz, which fall under the same centralised organism - Junta de Andalucía - the majority of museums have individual curatorial paths adapted to their collections, architecture, and curatorial policies.

Architectural constraints

The National Museum of Beirut was designed with the intent of placing the monumental objects on the ground floor and small finds upstairs (Wilmotte 1997). As a result, it is an example of a museum whose architecture was planned with a specific curatorial path intended since its inception. However (and perhaps unfortunately) this is not the case of all the museums in this study. In this part, I will be taking a closer look at how the architecture of the different museums can affect the displays of Phoenician collections. In order to do this, I have distinguished three main groups: museums built specifically with this purpose (museum group); museums taking place in buildings with an entirely different original function (other group); and museums in a building with a different original function but which has been refurbished or extended to fit the purposes of exhibiting collections (combined group). The table below details which museums fall within which group.

Museum	**Other**	**Combined**
Beirut National Museum	Louvre (palace)	AUB Museum (university building)
Idalion Museum	National Museum of Archaeology of Valletta (palace)	Museo Lilibeo Marsala (farm)
Limassol Museum	Museo Salinas Palermo (convent)	Museo Arqueológico Nacional (palace)
Cyprus Museum	Bardo Museum (palace)	Museo de Málaga (mansion)
Museo Whitaker Mozia		Museo de Cádiz (convent)
Museo Archeologico Nazionale Cagliari		
Museo Barreca Sant'Antioco		

Museo Marongiu Cabras		
Museo Arqueológico de Sevilla		
Museo de Huelva		
British Museum[9]		

Table 6: Museums by architectural structure.

In total, eleven museums, almost half of the dataset were designed as such and nine others originally had a different function. Before discussing the implications of each category in more detail, precision about the difference between the categories of other and combined is needed. All the museums included within these two categories are in buildings that were not designed to become museums. These were generally palaces, mansions, or convents. However, in the case of the combined category, said buildings have been heavily modified in order to fit their function as museums, resulting in a separation between four museums which remain in a building retaining a lot of its authentic architecture and six museums in buildings that have been adapted for this purpose.

In this latter group, the interior of the museum tends to be less impacted by the original architecture of the building as they have been redesigned to host archaeological collections. For instance, the AUB museum occupies a part of the building it is located in. This building also hosts offices, classrooms, and stores as well as a geological collection. On the outside, it adheres to the landscape of the university and does not stand out as a museum. As there are separate entrances for the museum and the rest of the building, the regular users of the space do not need to interact with the museum at all. This situation of a shared building is rather unique in the dataset, as it is only happening at one other museum: the Bardo. There, the museum shares its home with the house of parliament. Again, these have separate entrances and there are therefore no direct contacts between the users of each space. However, in both these cases, the environment affects the museum in more than one way. At AUB, this is reflected in the opening hours of the museum which follows an academic schedule and is therefore closed on weekends, resulting in a particular demographic of visitors. At the Bardo, the proximity with parliament comes hand in hand with safety measures unmatched in any other museum.

[9] The British Museum was originally housed in a former mansion from 1759, which was gradually demolished starting 1823.

Despite sharing similarities in terms of their interactions with their respective environments, these two museums differ in a fundamental way. While the AUB museum was initially planned for in the conception of the building (Baramki 1967, 12), the Bardo museum occupies an old palace that was not intended to become a museum (Fantar 1989). As a result, the navigation and structure of the museums are entirely different. The Bardo museum has had to adapt itself to the pre-existing plan of the building while the AUB museum was integrated within the plans, and although it does not occupy the entire space it has little restrictions linked to the design of its host building. To understand this point further, we can look at one particular gallery of the Bardo Museum: the Punic room (Figure 35). In the original plan of the building, this is a rectangular room. However, it has been restructured to include an oval section at its centre, representing the Mediterranean (Fersi 2018, pers. comm.). Inside the oval, the display features statues and stelae showing various Mediterranean cultural influences, from the Graeco-Roman to the Egyptian ends. On the outside of the oval are showcases with small artefacts such as pottery and ostrich eggs. The oval setup was, therefore, an intended vision from the curators of the museum, but it had to be adapted to a pre-existing architectural design. This design, in turn, influenced the way in which the collections had to be displayed, with the small finds showcases filling the negative space created by the oval setup. This is an obvious example but certainly not a unique one in the dataset. In fact, the Louvre and the National Museum of Archaeology of Malta join the Bardo in the category of former palaces cum museums with little changes affecting their original architecture, bringing the total number to three out of four in this category. What the palace structure brings in comparison to a museum or even another type of building is an unparalleled level of complexity in terms of plan. This is reflected in all these museums, but it is of utmost clarity at the Louvre which is by far the largest and most complex of the three edifices. It is composed of three main aisles which host nine departments on three floors. The brochure distributed to visitors breaks down the structure of the museum into over 850 galleries, not counting the rooms with administrative

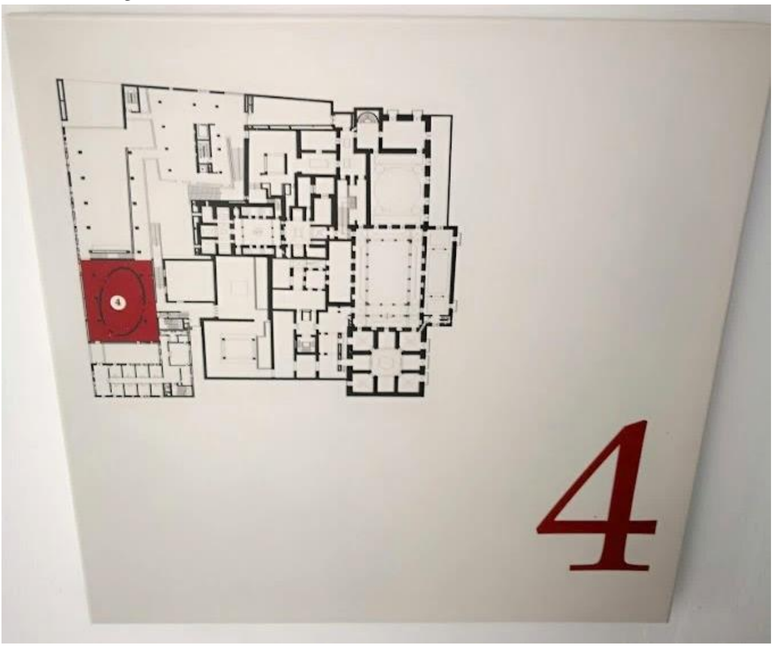


Figure 36: Situational plan of the Bardo Museum showing the Punic room highlighted. Photo author's own.

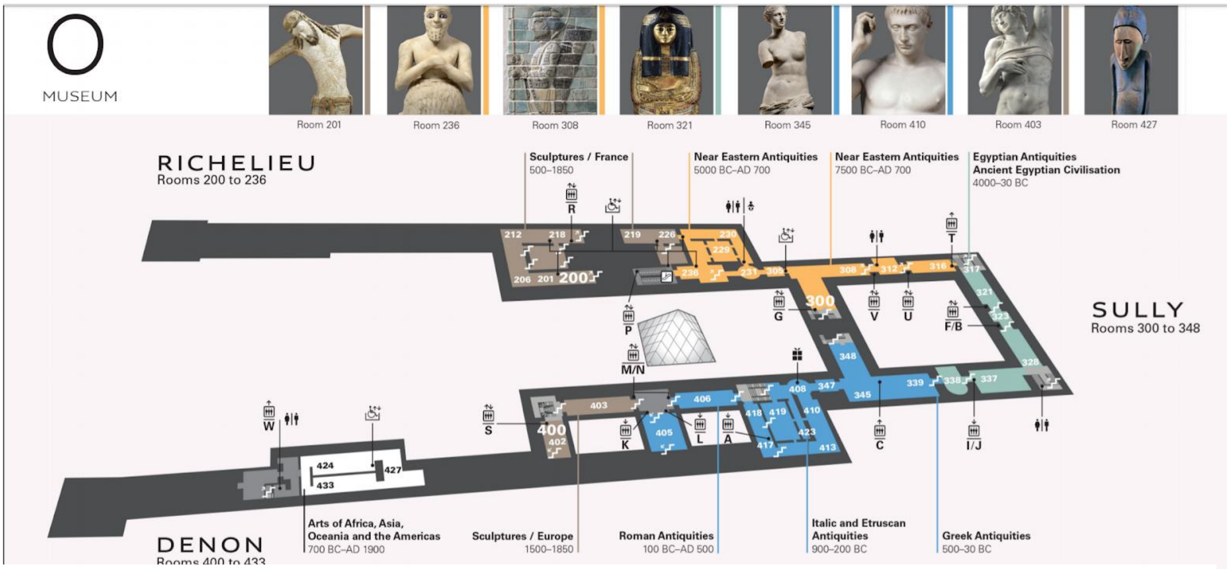


Figure 37: Brochure of the Louvre showing the ground floor, where the Phoenician collections are located (in yellow). © Musée du Louvre.

or storage functions (Figure 36). However, the situational maps located within the galleries show that the actual plan is much more complex, with some of these galleries divided into several segments (Figure 37). The result of this is a series of innumerable rooms exacerbating the size of the museum and making it difficult to navigate. This is especially true of the galleries containing Phoenician collections, which are not all adjacent and some of which are located on a sub-level. These are therefore not easy to find, and the lack of a recommended itinerary for the museum due to its large size means that visitors are often wandering in and out in any direction instead of following the originally intended path that goes from East to West. However, this does not overly affect the experience of these collections since there is no chronological parameter in the curatorial path of the Louvre. Visitors

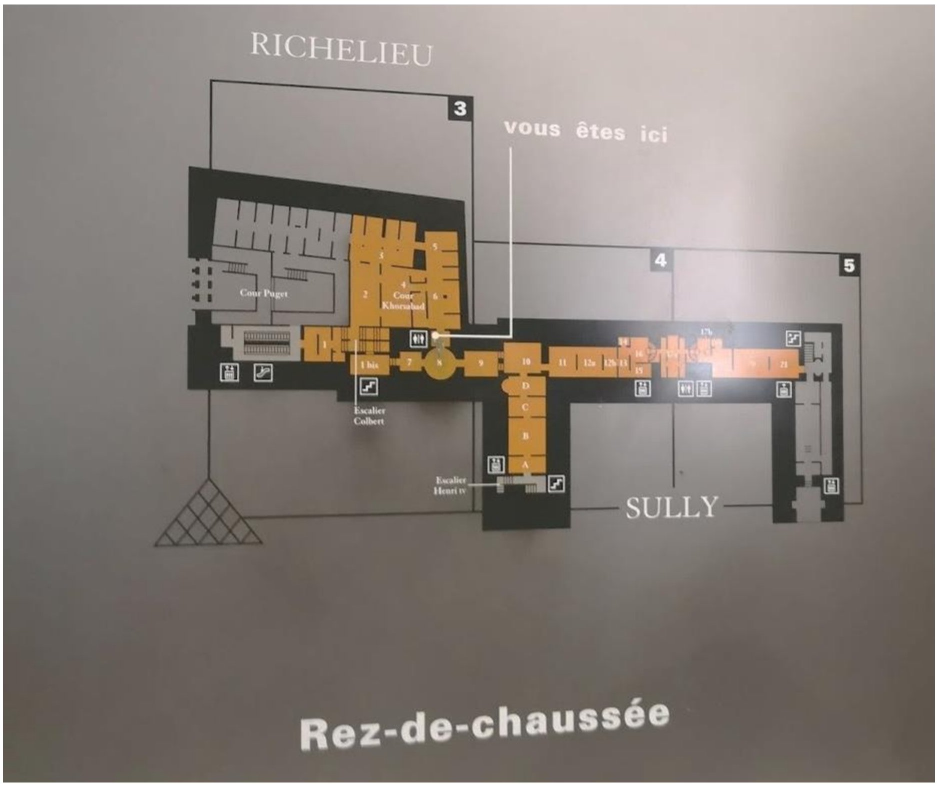


Figure 38: Situational plan of the Louvre. Photo author's own.

can therefore refer to gallery panels to contextualise the material they are interacting with without breaking any chronological flow which might generate confusion. This is quite unique to the Louvre, and an interesting comparison can be done here with the British Museum. While they are roughly the same size in terms of surface area, the British Museum is much more compact than the Louvre, which results in entirely different experiences. While it is easy (and often recommended) to ignore or miss out on a part of both these museums, it is much easier to do so at the Louvre given its elongated plan.
The architectural legacy of former palaces and mansions does not end with their complex plans. Among other commonalities between the Louvre, the Bardo, and the Valletta museums are large windows letting in a lot of light and sometimes generating reflections on the showcases. There are also remains of the interior design of the palaces, which the museums often decide to preserve and display as part of their history and heritage. For example, the national museum of Malta still features the grand salon in its centre, free of any showcases hosting archaeological collections like in the rest of the museum and becoming a part of the display itself. At the Bardo, in the Carthage gallery, showcases are distributed along a balcony trailing around the room, merging the archaeology with the architecture.

However, while the grand architectural legacy is still very visible in all these museums, some of them have adapted some galleries in order to match their curatorial approach. I have already discussed the Punic room of the Bardo museum, which is one such example, and another is the national museum of Malta. Despite preserving the skeleton of the building, as well as the authentic aspect of some rooms, the main galleries of the museum have been adapted to suit guidelines of modern museum displays. Especially in the Bronze Age and Phoenician galleries, this results in a contemporary approach inside a historic monument. The rooms retain little if any of their original character. They are colour-coded according to the period and feature cohesive installations of large panels and showcases working as one and adopting a thematic based approach. This comes in contrast with the Louvre, for example, where the showcases and panels do not affect the space around them.

Spanish museums, in particular the Museo Arqueológico Nacional and the Museo de Málaga, take this contemporary approach even further. Both were subject to important renovations in recent years (2016 for Málaga and 2015 for Madrid) and are among the most innovative museums included in the dataset. Not only do they feature interactive displays, but they also adopt approaches suited to their respective scales and collections. For instance, the Málaga museum has very contextual displays focusing on the history of the city and its surroundings. However, because most of the remains are now invisible because of modern occupation, it works to contextualise the material by providing maps and explanatory panels on the topography of the city. In addition, its interpretational direction (at least in the Phoenician gallery) is centred on cultural interactions rather than on an approach privileging a puritan chronological or materials-based division, highlighting the complexity of the archaeological data and the information it provides.

In Madrid, the same will to equip visitors with contextual information is attested. However, because it is at a much larger scale, the method differs. While in Madrid the use of maps and timelines parallels the approach taken in Málaga, the national museum of Madrid also includes a showcase bringing together a variety of materials from the different overlapping cultures of Iron Age Spain. Not only does this help contextualisation in terms of geography (as mentioned earlier), but it also integrates the material within a curatorial path mainly focused on chronology as well as demonstrating the will of the museum to adapt its displays to contemporary curation principles.

The Museo de Cádiz, on the other hand, has not had its showcases or labelling majorly updated since the 1980s (López 2019, pers. comm.). However, it still retains some of the characteristics attested in museums which have been transformed from their original function in the sense that although the interpretation is not the most innovative, the interior structure corresponds to that of a museum with made to measure displays and little traces of the convent it used to be. The same can be said of the Museo Lilibeo of Marsala and the AUB museum which I have already discussed at length. In all these cases, while the skeleton of the building is preserved to a certain extent, the interior has been modified enough to reflect the atmosphere of a museum, with bespoke showcases and displays created to fit around the space rather than the opposite. This is true no matter the former function of the building, but the extent to which it has been modified can vary according to different factors. The Museo Lilibeo for example, a former farm composed of two main buildings, has made use of this separation to organise its collections by maritime versus terrestrial ones. The two edifices are now linked by the entrance and ticket office of the museum.

In this aspect, buildings which have been subject to important transformations are quite similar to museums which were originally planned as such. The British Museum brings these together. It was originally a mansion which was gradually destroyed to allow for a purposefully made space, whose entities were also built during different phases, to exist. It has therefore evolved to the point where its original occupational phases are now entirely invisible. This perception is also facilitated by the history of the museum and the communication around it. The British Museum is first and foremost known for its collection, not for the former functions of its building. This may seem trivial, but it is always referred to as the British Museum whereas the Louvre, for instance, is still often called a palace in both popular language and official sources which furthers the ambiguity of perceptions in this space. Communication and presentation are therefore important factors which can affect how a museum and its collections are experienced.

However, in the case of museums that were designed as such, communication is already clearer because there was never another function the museum needs to override. There are many ways to design a museum and many parameters to consider when doing so, but it is unnecessary to dwell on these here. What the museums in this group have in common is that they were designed and built because of the existence of a collection and a need to host it and present it. The collection was therefore

the starting point and the museums were, in theory at least, conceived around it. This is also true for museums with former functions which adapted their architecture to fit new findings. Moreover, museums which were built as such can also have been subject to structural changes over time, as is the case for example of the Cyprus Museum. This museum was initially designed by a Greek architectural firm and was adapted over time to welcome further additions to the collections (Pilides 2019). At the time of writing, it follows a very traditional organisation based on materials and chronology. However, there are plans for the construction of a new Cypriot national museum which will adopt an entirely different curatorial approach. It will consist of three main branches, each following a specific theme linked to the history of Cyprus (Pilides 2019).

This example shows that museums can and do evolve with their times and that the fact that a building which was originally designed as a museum does not exclude evolution in the way of laying out and presenting the collections. Sometimes, museums built as such in the early 20th century are no longer adapted to the material they host and need to evolve with their collections. This is visible notably in the Museo Arqueológico de Sevilla, where the exhibition on El Carambolo (inaugurated in 2012) is completely disconnected from its contemporary material because of bad conditions in the building (San Martin 2019, pers. comm.). In other cases, like the Beirut National Museum, museums are adapting the labelling and adding some recent discoveries while respecting the original design. Finally, there is also the category of museums built more recently, like those of Idalion, Cabras, or Huelva which have been subject to little layout changes since their inauguration. We have also seen that museums with a former function can be home to innovative and contemporary approaches of displaying. In the end, architectural factors can affect displays in many ways, but they do not necessarily affect the curatorial approach taken by museums and there is no global rule which dictates how they should be structured. Each museum is dependent on its own environment, with a building more or less integrated into it and collections more or less integrated within the building.

Collections constraints

Aside from challenges linked to the structure of the museum and its potential former functions, the displays of collections can also be affected by factors linked to the nature of the collections themselves. These can often be physical factors such as size, weight, material, state of preservation or a combination of several of these categories. These factors can also be linked to quantity and provenance, bringing us back to the cue of geographical designation. However, unlike geographical delineation, definition, or other cues, collections constraints are not always obviously detectable in museums. The same way that architectural constraints reverberate on the organisation of the museum and the place of certain collections within it, so do collections constraints. In other words, this means that a visitor will immediately understand that an object is placed in a certain showcase, labelled as Phoenician, and dated to a particular time period because it falls within the definition

indicated by the museum and matches the category of the showcase, be it by its provenance, theme, material, etc… However, if there are conditions linked to the nature of the object affecting its display in said showcase, these will not be made clear to visitors.

Some of these conditions are permanent, such as size and weight while others can be temporary like state of preservation. The Louvre actually has examples of objects with both permanent and temporary conditions affecting its displays. I have already mentioned the discontinuous galleries where the Phoenician and Cypriot material is exhibited. One of the reasons behind this discontinuity is linked to collections constraints. The last gallery of the aisle contains Cypriot material, among which an artefact known as the Amathus vase (Figure 38). The Amathus vase is actually a colossal monolithic limestone basin measuring 1.20m in height and 3.20m in diameter. It has been sitting in its current location since the 19th century, and the work it must have taken to ship it from Cyprus and install it at the Louvre was undoubtedly titanic (Amiet 1971, 14). Because of its enormous dimensions, this object is now bound to its location as the cost of moving it would be too high. The rest of the material associated with it therefore has to be arranged around it. This would not be such a constraint if the Amathus vase was an isolated case at the Louvre. However, there are many more objects in the same situation across the museum, such as the Assyrian reliefs or the Achaemenid friezes (and this is just in the department of Near Eastern Antiquities). As a consequence, many of the displays have had to be organised according to the disposition of the unmovable artefacts as the collection grew with time. This plays an important part in explaining why some of the material on view at the Louvre (notably the Phoenician one) is not always displayed in a continuous way. If we compare this to the British Museum, where the collection is much smaller in number, we can see why it is easier for the British Museum to concentrate its Phoenician displays around a single showcase, creating an entirely different contextualisation of this material than the Louvre.



Figure 39: The Amathus vase at the Louvre. Photo author's own.

In the same gallery where the Amathus vase stands, there is a showcase with two empty spots. This is usually the space occupied by two metal bowls, part of the infamous series discovered in the 19th century and labelled as Phoenician based on stylistic elements and flimsy interpretations of

inscriptions. I will come back to the controversy surrounding these bowls when discussing style. The metal bowls are not a common type of object in the dataset, and the other examples are distributed between the British Museum, the Cyprus Museum, and the Museo Arqueológico Nacional. This is partly due to the fact that many of them are at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, which was not included in this project, but also due to the fact that their most frequent occurrences are outside Phoenician contexts, and they are thus not always exhibited with the Phoenician material. It is therefore quite interesting when they do originate from sites linked with the Phoenicians and are presented in corresponding galleries, as in the case of the metal bowls of the Louvre. These objects were not on display at the time of my visit because their preservation state did not allow for it. Because of this, they were taken out for conservation (Le Meaux 2018, pers. comm.). This is an example of a temporary constraint linked to artefacts affecting their display, and although there was no set date for their return to the showcase this was expected. Similarly, artefacts taken out to be displayed at various exhibitions result in empty spots in showcases, but it is an inevitable phenomenon throughout museums, and it is not really linked to the condition of the collections themselves.

Another example of the weight of an artefact affecting its presentation in the museum can be found in Málaga. The museum of Málaga operates a system of open storage in its lower ground floor. This does not include the entire stores of the museum and the objects, placed inside cabinets and drawers are unlabelled because they are rotated on a regular basis (Palomares Samper 2019, pers. comm.). Aside from these small finds, this floor also includes some monumental pieces, too heavy to be included as part of the actual displays. Among these, there is a particularly interesting Phoenician hypogeum which would have had its place perfectly along with the other funerary items in the Phoenician gallery such as the Tomba del Guerrero and the shaft tomb of the necropolis of Chorreras. However, its weight prevents it from joining them on the second floor, and the rotative system of the open stores prevents it from being labelled, as partial labelling there would be confusing for visitors. Thus, this hypogeum (an exceptional artefact with good contextual information) is condemned to remain free of interpretation in a room barely frequented. Despite its downfalls, this system of open visitable storage does, however, offer an interesting alternative both for objects such as this which would otherwise not be seen at all, but also for objects with no particular constraints but which simply did not make it to the main showcases due to limitations in space and information capacity. It serves as a good reminder that displays are but a selected sample of the actual archaeological record, itself a fraction of informative data.

One final collection restriction worth having a closer look at is concerned with assemblages rather than individual objects. Museums will sometimes have reconstructions of a particular context; often this comes in the form of a tomb because of the clear contextual information undisturbed tombs provide, but it can be different things. Museums in Sardinia, for instance, tend to feature reconstructions of tophets. Tophets are an interesting subject for reconstructions because they are particular to the

Phoenico-Punic central Mediterranean (Bonnet 2011, 373). As a result, it is quite a unique environment, not always understood by non-archaeologists or even non-Phoenician specialists. Therefore, providing a reconstruction of it in a museum along with explanation can help projection. However, while a tomb reconstruction can usually fit within a single showcase, tophets are more spread out in space and thus pose a different challenge for museums. This is particularly clear in the Museo Archeologico Nazionale of Cagliari, which presents a reconstruction of the tophet of Tharros. Going back to its curatorial path, we can see that the museum is organised chronologically on the ground floor, which is where the recommended itinerary begins. This floor is divided into two main galleries, and the Phoenician material is in the second one. The tophet reconstruction, however, is set up in a sort of inner courtyard between the first room and the narrow gallery dedicated to temporary exhibitions (Figure 39). Visitors are thus confronted to the tophet reconstruction long before encountering the Phoenician material, as the reconstruction is still at the level of Neolithic collections in room A. Therefore, despite the museum's efforts to provide an overview of the chronology of Sardinia on the ground floor before moving to individual sites on the upper floor, the tophet reconstruction disturbs this intended navigation because this was the most convenient place to set it up in (Puddu 2019, pers. comm.).

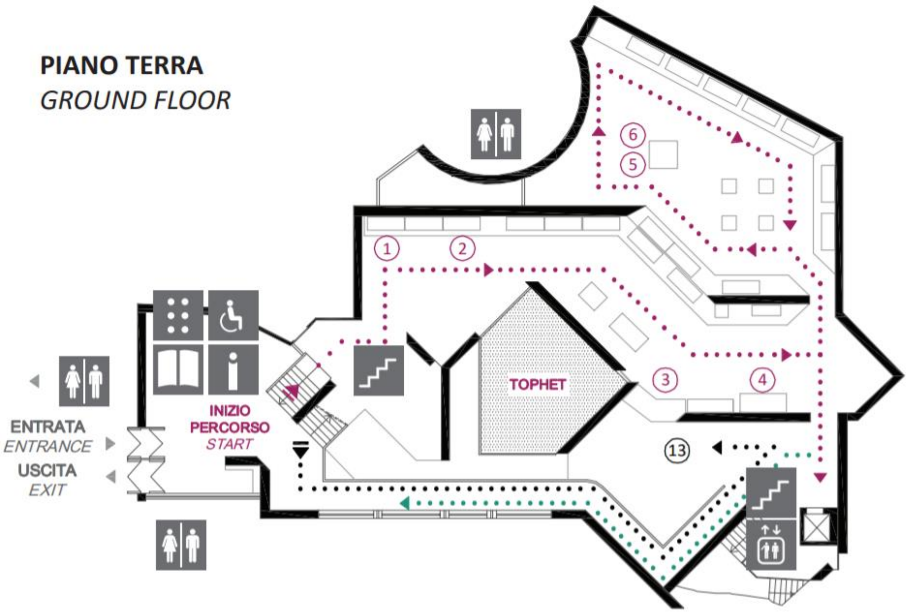


Figure 40: Plan of the ground floor of the Cagliari Museum, showing the location of the tophet. © Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Cagliari.

Constraints linked to the collections can therefore take various aspects and affect the setup and/or navigation of museums in different ways. This impact usually depends on the nature of the restriction and the degree of permanence it has. While constraints caused by the state of preservation of artefacts are usually solved following a certain time delay or by modifying the conditions of showcases, those imposed by weight and size are more of a long-term issue museums have to deal with and work around. Collections constraints serve as a good reminder that no matter how ideal the conception of a museum's cultural policy and intention of display are, they will constantly be faced with internal challenges coming from their own collections which they have to adapt to. These come hand in hand with other types of limitations, bringing us back to

geographical provenance and architecture, which means that each museum builds around all the factors influencing its collection, hence their singular nature despite having similar collections.

Curatorial choices

The last cue I will be discussing in this chapter is one of the most influential ones when it comes to designing museum displays. All of the factors discussed above, some quantitative, some qualitative, some trackable and others more intuitive, combine at varying degrees depending on the museum to help generate a certain narrative. However, the overall result and the selection and grouping of artefacts within and without showcases ultimately depends on one thing: decisions and choices made by curators. This is obviously the most difficult trend to detect from the data since the displays do not explicitly reveal these choices. Interviews come into play here since curators play a key role as the link between the exhibited and the unseen material. Having informal discussions with at least one curator per museum was therefore crucial in order to understand some of the rationales at play behind decision making which led to the current displays. Talking with curators also provided clarifications regarding some of the other cues, such as reasons for adopting a certain curatorial path, defining the Phoenician period in a certain way, labelling policy, or the particular use of certain terms. It must be noted, however, that the amount of information generated by these interviews is neither constant nor exhaustive. Time constraints from both sides meant that we could not have an endless discussion about the particularities of every single showcase, but that we covered the most important players shaping the displays. Moreover, some curators were naturally more expansive than others, and some simply had more to say as they were directly involved in the conception and installation of the latest displays while others had not worked on them. For these reasons, some examples of curatorial choices in certain museums I will be tackling are more evident than in others. This follows a pattern already established when discussing other cues, as each museum has its peculiarities and a museum with a particularly interesting example of curatorial path might not necessarily be the same as a museum with a particularly interesting example of temporal definition or frequency, and so on. I will, therefore, be focusing on relevant cases of curatorial choices in some museums based on how they affect the Phoenician displays.

Curatorial choices can often be triggered as a response to the local context, be it archaeologically, politically, or even popularly. This is where we can then find some similarities between museums of the same country or region, despite the fact that they can be completely different in all other aspects. Both Cyprus and Sardinia provide interesting yet contrasting examples of this situation.

In Cyprus, we have already encountered several examples of museums with a relatively old way of displaying, with a simple curatorial path based on materials and date and with little labelling, therefore little mentions of the term Phoenician. This is the case for both the Cyprus Museum and the Limassol Museum. This policy of displaying impacts the perceptions and interpretations of

Phoenician material in both these museums, as it becomes nearly invisible because it is almost not distinguished from the rest of the material at all. While this is mostly the result of an outdated curatorial policy, there are other factors at play here. Around the time these displays were set up, Phoenician archaeology was beginning to experience its renaissance (although this was mostly focused on the central and western Mediterranean), so we can expect this renewal to have reached Cyprus. However, the country had recently obtained independence and experienced the ensuing tensions which led to its division in 1974. The museums I visited are all in the Greek section of Cyprus; it is thus unsurprising that they chose to focus on the Greek and local aspects of their culture rather than the Phoenician one. However, the historical context alone is not sufficient to explain some of the patterns in more recent approaches in Cypriot museums. The Amathus exhibition at the Limassol Museum, for instance, still actively avoids the use of the term Phoenician when possible, despite the now well-established evidence for Phoenician activity at the site (Aupert 1997, 20).

The Idalion museum also features an interesting example of a curatorial choice that is perhaps less conscious than some others. In fact, the site museum of Idalion takes a much more contemporary approach in its displays compared to the museums of Nicosia and Limassol. Phoenician material and activity are well documented, and this is reflected in the labelling and showcases of the museum. The archaic period pottery showcase features both local, Phoenician, and Greek artefacts. However, the latter are placed centrally in the showcase, betraying a tendency towards Greek culture echoing the choices made in other Cypriot museums. This might be a small detail, but it is still noticeable (in my capacity as a researcher rather than as a visitor) and says something about the overall narrative created in Cyprus.

Having said that, there is a shift happening in Cyprus, already foretold by the Amathus exhibition in Limassol and the approach of the Idalion Museum. The Limassol Museum should be closing in the near future in order to update the displays (Violaris 2019, pers. comm.). The Cyprus Museum has even bigger plans. The museum will not be renovated in the current building, but there are plans to build a new home for the collections. The new construction will be facing the current museum, which will become an exhibition space for medieval and Byzantine collections as well as a storage area (Pilides 2019). The new museum will therefore host the material currently exhibited in the Cyprus Museum; a building no longer adapted to the narrative the curators wish to adopt. The new museum will consist of three units, each one dedicated to a specific aspect of Cypriot history and archaeology (Anon 2017, in press). These will be more contextual and thematic displays than the current ones, focusing on sea, land, and kingdoms (Pilides 2019). The Phoenicians will play a more important role than they do in the current museum, yet it is likely that the Phoenician collections will not be concentrated in a single area the way that they are in Malta for example. The expectation is that they will be integrated according to the different contexts the new museum focuses on.

This updated more local and contextual approach follows a wave of renewal in Cypriot archaeological thought and practice, shifting away from colonial approaches viewing Cyprus as a permanent middle ground between East and West and starting to consider it as its own entity (Iacovou 2013, 16). The current scarcity of labelling at the national museum can be an advantage in the sense that it favours objectivity in interpretation. The future museum will be faced in a different challenge when it comes to preserving this objectivity while building a narrative representative of the multiplicity of contexts and complexity of the island (Pilides 2019, pers. comm.).

We can turn to Sardinia for a contrasting case study. All the museums I visited in Sardinia share a common aspect, which was amongst the most noticeable things when walking through them: they all feature extensive amounts of labelling and interpretation. Of course, Sardinian museums are not the only ones with a large number of explanatory panels, as we have already seen when discussing frequency. What is significant is that this pattern of all museums sharing this particular aspect is unique to Sardinia. (Of course, noting that I only visited one museum in some countries and regions such as Malta and Tunisia, making it impossible to trace a pattern there). The prolificness of labelling in Sardinia is not pure coincidence, nor is it the result of an unfunded centralised policy, as the museums depend on different central authorities based on their respective provinces. For instance, the Cabras museum is affiliated to a different soprintendenza than the Cagliari museum.

In order to understand why labelling plays such an important role in Sardinia, it is crucial to understand the local context. Popular ideologies in Sardinia tend to be imprinted with a strong sense of local patriotism, an island-wide pride in being Sardinian (Puddu 2019, pers. comm.). The Bronze Age landscape of Nuragic archaeology is a unique phenomenon in the Mediterranean, and this is what has drawn the most popular focus. As a result, this phase is often the most highlighted one in museums, as we have already seen with the Cabras and Monte Prama example. However, this emphasis on the Nuragic past of Sardinia in museums does not necessarily come at the expense of other phases, notably the Phoenician one. We have already seen that in Cabras, the high frequency of guided tours taking place in the Monte Prama section contributed to more abundant labelling in the Phoenician section (Del Vais 2019, pers. comm.). Moreover, despite the importance of the Nuragic period for local Sardinian identities, archaeologists and museum professionals are well aware that the popular perception of Sardinian identity as purely local and the rejection of foreign invasions (among which the Phoenician ones) are distinct from the scientific reality. This phenomenon is in fact much larger than simple local pride and it began to significantly take off in the early 2000s, following the publication of a book by Sergio Frau (2002) proposing to place the famous pillars of Hercules in the straits of Sicily instead of Gibraltar and consequently equating Sardinia with the lost city of Atlantis. Sardinian archaeologists and curators refer to this movement as fanta-archaeology, and their goal is to educate the general public and raise awareness of all aspects of the Sardinian past in an even manner, without placing more emphasis on a certain period (Puddu 2019, pers. comm.). In this quest

for providing as much information as possible, Sardinian museums therefore find themselves making extensive use of explanatory panels.

This is interesting when compared to what is happening in Cyprus: while both islands have a popular tendency to reject or ignore Phoenician identity and culture, museums in each one have entirely different responses to this and ways in which it is translated in their displays. The wave of change in Cyprus should, therefore, be of utmost interest when it comes to tracking the direction in which this narrative will evolve, and whether it will become closer to the one developed in Sardinia, keeping in mind that Phoenician presence in Cyprus presents a much more ambiguous and entangled case than in Sardinia.

The final case I will be discussing in relation to curatorial choices concerns the two international museums. Given their nature, these will have entirely different challenges than national, regional, or site museums, which often makes their curatorial decisions more complex. For instance, the Louvre was undergoing an update of its labelling system when I conducted research there in March 2018. Back then, it was in the midst of renewing the labels of Phoenician material, both in terms of showcase and individual labels. The Phoenician galleries were not closed despite this transition, and old and new labels coexisted along with some temporary signage put in place in order not to leave the collections naked of any context. It was quite unique and interesting to be able to directly compare the previous labelling system with the new one. Generally, the latter features more detailed and contextual information, although it is difficult to produce a definitive comparison given that some of the older labels might have been removed and not replaced by then. For instance, the showcase on Phoenician funerary material in the crypt was only equipped with a brief showcase label of the older generation, and individual artefacts inside it were not labelled. However, this is not due to lack of contextual information, as is sometimes the case in other museums (e.g. the AUB museum has almost no indications on provenance on its labels because of the high volume of acquisitions (Mady 2017, pers. comm.)), since all these objects have an entry in the Louvre's reference catalogue. Therefore, it is more likely that this showcase was in course of renovation, explaining the lack of individual labels.

Another notable change is the fact that the new labels cite dates in absolute terms, whereas the old ones employed the more standard method of using a range of centuries. This can seem a questionable choice given that relative dating tends to be the norm in archaeological museums, and it was indeed questioned by the curators of the department of Near Eastern antiquities (Le Meaux 2018, pers. comm.). As a matter of fact, the decision to redo the labelling did not come from them but from the department of mediation and cultural programming. This initiative started in 2015 and aims to unify the interpretation in all departments of the Louvre (Le Meaux 2018, pers. comm.). The archaeological and artistic departments, therefore, have to respond to the same relatively strict guidelines, which causes much back and forth and delays in the final version. This also explains why the galleries cannot be entirely closed during this process. This could be an interesting policy at the level of the museum

because it would create more coherence for visitors, but it is nevertheless extremely challenging for different departments to adhere to criteria that might not serve their collections best. The curators responsible for Phoenician collections at the Louvre must, therefore, make complicated choices to give a voice to the material while fitting in a certain system.

This will to provide coherence and contextuality is almost inherent of a large international museum with a varied collection. And while at the Louvre it is currently taking the shape of unification of labelling, the British Museum has another way to bring it all together. There too, labels are the vehicle to contextuality; not because they are all formatted in the same way, but because they refer to one another and send the visitors to different showcases. For instance, the label of the jewellery from Tharros links to older Levantine material and points the visitor to the showcase in which it is exhibited. Similarly, the word 'Phoenician' is mentioned relatively often in the labelling of Cypriot material in order to clearly draw the link between the two. As previously mentioned, the Cypriot and Phoenician material belong to two different departments at the British Museum. As a result, they are exhibited in two relatively close by yet fully distinct galleries. The fact that the labelling makes the collections respond to one another is therefore crucial in providing links and contextuality in an institution the scale of the British Museum. Moreover, the labels in the Phoenician showcase referring to other showcases within the Levantine galleries furthers this aspect. Despite the fact that they are located in the same space, the different Levantine collections are still quite scattered and eclectic in their provenance, hence the importance of bringing them together through interpretation. The British Museum, therefore, provides a strong and perhaps unexpected example when it comes to bringing contextuality to the material on display. The Phoenician collections are linked to older Near Eastern collections they share their gallery space with on one side and with the Cypriot collections, physically separated from them by the structure of the museum on the other.

This segment has demonstrated that curatorial choices can affect the display of collections in more than one way and that these are often translated in the labelling and other interpretation vehicles. These choices can be made by different authorities of the museum, be it the curators directly involved with the Phoenician collections, curators of other departments, or even centralised interpretation units. In Andalusia, for example, all the museums depend on the same central institution, and although their actual displays vary greatly, the visitor brochures of the museums of Sevilla, Cádiz, Málaga and Huelva are all based on the same template. Curatorial choices are also dependent on a variety of factors which can be external or internal. Notable examples of external factors include political climate and popular ideas, whereas internal choices are usually dictated by the policy of the museum itself. Curatorial choices can be elusive and difficult to detect in the displays, yet they are the ultimate decider of the way the collections are presented. Within the framework of this thesis, this means that regardless of all the other cues discussed above, a small decision made by a curator can reverse the entire perception of Phoenician collections and that these patterns should therefore not be

taken as a rule or measure but rather as observable outcomes resulting from a combination of factors including personal choices.

Final thoughts

This chapter has served as the first increment in the part of this thesis dedicated to analysing and understanding perceptions of Phoenician collections in museums. It was based on eight cues derived from observations that could be made and questions that could be asked about the general setup of the displays and policies adopted by the museums. Each of these cues has its own translation in the organisational makeup of the museum and each comes with its own stakes. Examining the cues led to the first conclusion of this thesis: that no two museums have the same way of exhibiting Phoenician collections. Some museums may have the same curatorial path, the same temporal definition, or the same frequency band, but the end product of how their Phoenician material is interpreted and displayed will always be different from one place to the next. This is because each museum is conditioned by its own context and by the ensemble of cues or factors affecting the placement and labelling of every single artefact. Therefore, no matter how many aspects a certain museum shares with another, there are always more diverging cues than parallel ones between them. This is why similar objects, or even parts of the same objects such as the sun dial which has one fragment at the Louvre and the other at the national museum of Beirut end up presented in completely different ways (Figure 40). Ultimately, what makes the uniqueness of each museum is how these different factors interact.



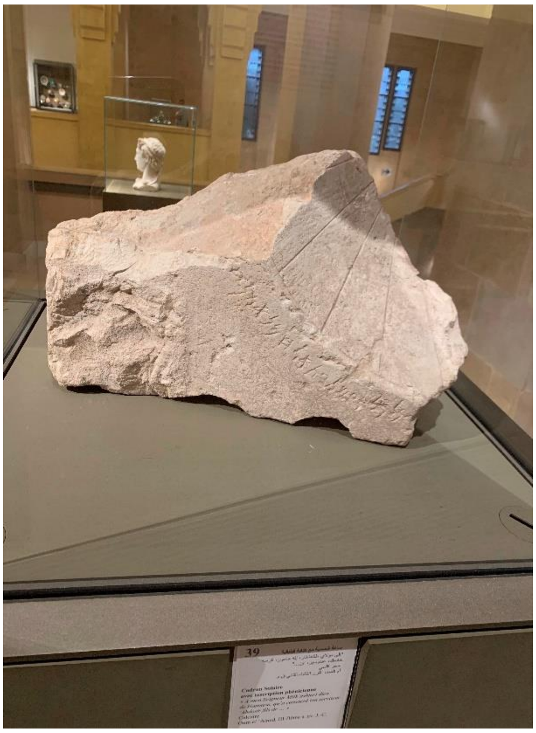


Figure 41: Fragments of the same sun dial at the Louvre and the Beirut National Museum. Photos author's own/public domain.

In addition to this, each museum will be affected by these parameters at varying degrees. For instance, the impact of geographical delineation might be more or less important compared to that of curatorial choices, and so on. Not every cue takes on the same role in all the museums. In fact, it is the sum of activity between the cues which determines the display. There are in fact many overlaps between the different cues, as one can directly affect another or even a couple of others. This superimposition across the cues makes them tricky to isolate and to funnel a specific one that might play a bigger role in all the museums. If anything, this chapter has demonstrated that there is not one single factor dictating the Phoenician narrative in museums, but that the fluidity of what makes Phoenician culture is echoed in these determining parameters. Having said that, there were still some evident patterns at the scale of individual or groups of cues. The fact that there are only so many scales of museums and categories of divisions in a curatorial path says something, as does the fact that most museums are clear on the stretch between 800 and 300 BCE for the Phoenician period, regardless of the overflow beyond those dates. This means that although the end product might be entirely different from one museum to the next, there are still commonalities and the overlaps between cues end up linking all the museums together. Therefore, even though there might not be a unified concept of the Phoenicians, there is at least an existing concept based on a certain idea. The narrative generated by this idea is then affected by the provenance of the collections, the structure of the museum, the political context surrounding it, and all the interplay between the different parameters.

Overall, this chapter focused mostly on the museological specificities which make the Phoenician displays. It was mainly dedicated to understanding how these displays function within the context of the museum and how they are integrated in it based on the eight cues. Some interesting patterns emerged from this and we now have a clearer picture of where each museum falls when it comes to the treatment of this material. What remains to be explored is the deeper end of the narrative, the one constructed by interpretational decisions. So far, I have only discussed interpretation and labelling within the framework of quantitative information they give, such as how frequently the term Phoenician is mentioned or how much labelling is employed at all. In the next chapter, I will be taking this analysis further in order to understand what image(s) museums give of the Phoenicians.

Chapter 4 | Stereotypes

Interpretation as a vehicle for perceptions

In the previous chapter, I established some patterns based on (mostly) quantitative cues which emerged from the displays of Phoenician material in museums. In this chapter, I will follow up on this discussion, but this time focusing on a more qualitative aspect of perceptions of the Phoenicians. While the perceptions emerging from cues were mappable to some extent and could be visualised, this segment enters the realm of ideas and interpretations. The pages that follow will be dedicated to tracking stereotypes about the Phoenicians in museum displays. Given the many attributes Phoenician identity has taken on throughout history, the logical next step after unpacking the museums in a broad way is to try to trace some of these ideas and associations in the displays.

In Chapter 2, I detailed the key perceptions and attitudes to the Phoenicians in literature which gave rise to some of the most important stereotypes the Phoenicians have been associated with until today. Most of these were already established in early sources such as the Bible, the Homeric epics, and the classical texts and have then been taken on and adapted by different groups and for different agendas, from politics to pop culture. These stereotypes are often divided by contemporary archaeologists between negative and positive ones. The negative stereotypes usually include the ideas of child sacrifice, decadence, and mysticism (especially in terms of religion), piracy and cunning trickery, among others. The positive stereotypes tend to relate more to famous Phoenician 'inventions', and so they can be considered more associations than stereotypes. Key ideas here include the alphabet, navigation, and fine craftsmanship as well as the purple dye industry. However, the line between positive and negative associations is a thin one. For example, a perspective depicting the Phoenicians as skilled navigators can easily be inverted to paint them as lawless pirates. This is one of the reasons why I will be staying away from the debate concerning negative versus positive stereotypes.

Another is the fact that at first glance, museums tend to portray the Phoenicians from a predominantly neutral perspective. Even when this period is given particular importance, (for example, in the AUB Archaeological Museum and the Museo de Cádiz) it is not associated with particular positive or negative tendencies. In Cádiz, the importance is generated by the unique character of the anthropoid sarcophagi, the only two known specimens from Spain (Lopez 2019, pers. comm.). At the AUB Museum, the reasons behind the emphasis are less clear, yet it is not done in the spirit of praise or blame. Nonetheless, this is not to say that museums are free from any stereotypes or associations linked with the Phoenicians. In the following pages, I will outline some of the key ideas associated with the Phoenicians in museums.

Finding stereotypes and associations in museums entails going through the interpretation and labelling, which will be the main focus of this chapter. Before I begin to expand on the different stereotypes, I will first break down the structure of museum mediation. In general, all the museums

included in the dataset follow a similar approach when it comes to communication regardless of their scale or curatorial path. The majority provide visitors with a brochure or leaflet which usually includes a map of the museum as well as some key information. Notable exceptions include the museums in Lebanon, the Bardo Museum, and most Italian museums, showing that providing a leaflet is not necessarily standard practise in all museums. The following table details the various methods of interpretation used in all the museums.

Museum	**Brochure**	**Video(s)**	**Textual labelling**
Beirut National Museum	No	Anthropoid sarcophagi	Large panels
			Showcase labels
			Individual labels
American University of Beirut (AUB) Archaeological Museum	No		Large panels
			Individual labels
The Cyprus Museum	Yes		Large panels
			Gallery panels
			Showcase labels
			Individual labels
Archaeological Museum of the Limassol District	Yes		Large panels
			Showcase labels
			Individual labels
Archaeological Museum of Ancient Idalion	Yes	Introduction about the museum and its collection	Large panels
			Showcase labels

Museum	**Brochure**	**Video(s)**	**Textual labelling**
			Individual labels
Musée du Louvre	Yes		Gallery panels
			Showcase labels
			Individual labels
British Museum	Yes		Large panels
			Gallery panels
			Showcase labels
			Individual labels
National Bardo Museum	No		Large panels
			Gallery panels
			Individual labels
National Museum of Archaeology (Valletta)	Yes	Introduction about the Phoenicians	Large panels
		Purple dye	Showcase labels
			Individual labels
Museo Arqueológico Nacional	Yes	History of the museum	Large panels
		Timeline	Showcase labels
		Phoenician navigation to the West	Individual labels

Museum	Brochure	Video(s)	Textual labelling
		Deities from the East	
Museo de Málaga	Yes	History of excavations	Large panels
			Showcase labels
			Individual labels
Museo de Cádiz	Yes		Gallery panels
			Showcase labels
			Individual labels
Museo Arqueológico de Sevilla	Yes	Site reconstruction	Large panels
			Gallery panels
			Showcase labels
			Individual labels
Museo de Huelva	Yes		Large panels
			Showcase labels
			Individual labels
Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Cagliari	No		Large panels
			Showcase labels
			Individual labels
	No		Large panels

Museum	Brochure	Video(s)	Textual labelling
Museo Archeologico Ferruccio Barreca			Individual labels
Museo Civico Giovanni Marongiu	Yes		Large panels Showcase labels Individual labels
Museo Archeologico Regionale Antonio Salinas	No		Large panels Gallery panels Showcase labels Individual labels
Museo Lilibeo	Yes		Large panels Showcase labels Individual labels
Museo Whitaker	Yes		Large panels Showcase labels Individual labels

Table 7: Methods of interpretation by museum.

When a brochure is available, it is not necessarily the most informative support when it comes to defining the Phoenicians because of the limited space it provides. In fact, some general information about this period can only be given in the case of museums where all the Phoenician material is regrouped, as the brochures usually follow the plan of the museum.

Multimedia mediation

In many cases, museums also supply additional information in the form of multimedia mediation. This can take the form of audio guides or smartphone applications. The National Museum of Beirut, for instance, provides QR codes on the labels of some key artefacts (Figure 41). Visitors can scan these to be directed to further precisions about the object which would otherwise not fit on the label. Audio guides play a similar role, with two main differences. The first one is that applications can provide visual as well as textual support, making them more interactive. The second difference is that audio guides function by tracks, so they follow a numbered order which smartphone applications do not necessarily have. This can be helpful in large museums with a complicated plan such as the Louvre or the British Museum, as it allows visitors to follow a certain path based on the audio guide. For the purpose of this project, I chose to exclude audio guides and smartphone applications while visiting the museums, firstly because of the limited time I had to take in, thoroughly document, and start to analyse the displays on top of consulting guides and archives and leading interviews with curators. Moreover, as audio guides and smartphone applications are a complementary form of mediation, they are not used by a majority of museum visitors (whereas brochures tend to be more systematically utilised) and when they are it might not be to focus on Phoenician material (Lee 2017, 706). This chapter will therefore be based on more anchored forms of interpretation, although it is important to note that additional mediation is sometimes provided by museums.



Figure 42: A label with a QR code at the Beirut National Museum. Photo author's own.

Videos are another form of multimedia interpretation, this time one that is more permanent and embedded in the displays. Several museums in the dataset included one or more videos as part of the presentation of their Phoenician collections. These can cover a wide array of topics, from focusing on a particular assemblage such as the anthropoid sarcophagi at the Beirut National Museum or the Tomba del Guerrero at the Museo de Málaga, a specific aspect of Phoenician culture such as navigation to the west at the Museo Arqueológico Nacional, or simply for general information as in the case in the National Museum of Archaeology in Valletta. Videos are useful tools for museums because they provide an alternative platform of interpretation, offering some advantages over traditional labelling. For instance, the anthropoid sarcophagi at the Beirut National Museum are exhibited in a very dark gallery where all the light concentrates on the artefacts themselves (Figure 42). Having a video therefore remedies the issue of readability of text panels in a dark room and allows for a curatorial approach which would not have been possible otherwise. Another advantage of videos is that they allow for contextual reconstruction of archaeological features that are not transportable to a museum environment, notably architectural elements (Pietroni and Adami 2014). For instance, the exhibition

on El Carambolo at the Museo Arqueológico de Sevilla provides a video reconstruction of the sanctuary, helping place the artefacts back in context. This is quite a significant appeal of videos in that they can sometimes be the only vehicle to bring back key information. Of course, some museums also use models and reconstructions of architectural features, but these can only translate one phase of occupation when the artefacts often transcend this (Bruno et al. 2014). Finally, one significant advantage of videos is that they allow for more information to be transmitted in general, as they provide more space for text than labels do while occupying less space in the total area of the museum. Additionally, they can often be more engaging than long lines of text. However, videos still have their limitations - notably their time restrictions. The videos in the museums I have visited did not exceed seven minutes, and most visitors I interacted with only dedicated about two minutes per video. These are therefore handy tools for certain purposes, but they cannot be overly used by museums at the risk of disengaging visitors.



Figure 43: The display of anthropoid sarcophagi at the Beirut National Museum. Photo author's own.

Textual labels

The most common method of interpretation therefore remains in the form of textual labels. In the museums I visited, these can be divided into three to four levels. The broadest level and the one that tends to occupy the most space is the large panel format. These can vary in their focus, as they can be used to cover general information about a certain time period or region, but they can also be associated with assemblages in a showcase or a group of showcases, especially in the case of thematic or regional focuses. Large panels are invariably present in all the museums (although some were being redone during my visit to the Louvre (Le Meaux 2018, pers. comm.)), but as a general trend they tend to be more prominent in smaller museums than in international ones. This is likely due to the fact that

smaller museums tend to have more focused collections, allowing them to expand on specific aspects of it while museums with more diverse collections tend to use large panels as vehicles for more general information. The other form of labelling used invariably by all museums is the lowest level, individual objects label. Not every single artefact in every single showcase has its own labels, for reasons ranging from lack of contextual information to curatorial policy, but this remains the most widespread form of labelling. Individual labels vary in the amount of detail they include, but they usually feature the object types, material, provenance and date, except when showcases are organised by context, where in that case the date and location are the same for all its contents and are therefore mentioned on the showcase label. Individual labels sometimes include more detailed information: inscribed objects are often accompanied by a translation and some artefacts (notably unfamiliar-looking ones such as spindle whorls for instance) can have some more detailing as to what their function was, albeit this can also be done on a larger panel. Once again, the level of detail and where it is placed depends on the structural organisation of the museum.

In between large panels and individual object labels, museums usually adopt a mid-level form of labelling as well. They can take the form of showcase or gallery labels, sometimes with both coexisting in the same museums. Some museums with large showcases, like the Museo de Málaga, make use of both showcase labels and assemblage labels within the showcases. Once again, the choice of label and what information it holds greatly depends on the organisation of the museum. In the Museo de Málaga, a former mansion, the Phoenician collections are all located within the same gallery, a wide space structured by long showcases creating a pathway for visitors. As a result, there is no gallery label, but the navigation is rhythmed by some large showcase labels in addition to the smaller ones focusing on assemblages. In other museums, such as the Louvre, where the Phoenician collections are not displayed continuously and the architectural plan is complex, gallery labels are important because they help situate the material.

Aside from the alternative methods of mediation mentioned above such as brochures, videos, or audio guides, there are two types of textual labelling: those directly associated with material (usually individual and showcase labels) and those not necessarily connected with particular artefacts (most frequently the large panels). These are not mutually exclusive, however, since a showcase label can provide information about a particular context and the material originating from it, or it can focus on a particular theme around which the showcase is centred. Labelling also comes at three broad scales, decreasing the amount of text and increasing the amount of detail as we move from panels to individual labels. We could, therefore, expect that the stereotypes and associations with the Phoenicians will be more prominent on the more general and expansive labels.

Creating connections

Before moving on to the stereotypes proper, I will look deeper into the interactions between labels and museums. Large panels and showcase labels, in particular, present some interesting means of communication in two aspects: there are many instances where citations are used, and others where the labelling refers to artefacts beyond the assemblage inside the corresponding showcase or gallery. These are both interesting means of connecting materials and interpretations.

Through literature

In the case where the panels refer to quotes, this can help visitors understand attitudes to and perceptions of the Phoenicians in literature. Furthermore, the quotes used are usually related to the collection of the museum. These can be extracted from ancient sources or from more recent ones. For example, the National Museum of Archaeology of Malta presents quotes from the Bible (Isaiah 23.8), Homer, Silus Italicus, and Diodorus Siculus, but it also shows an extract from the Malta Gazette in 1819 and a quote by Paolo Bellanti (an archaeologist who worked on the Phoenician and Punic tombs) from the 1910s. These quotes are all more or less specific to Malta and its Phoenician archaeology, and I will come back to them while discussing particular stereotypes. The Museo Arqueológico Nacional accompanies its panel on Phoenician colonisation with quotes from Strabo and Diodorus Siculus, respectively talking about the foundation of Cádiz and the appeal of silver on the Andalusian coast. The Cádiz Museum also offers an interesting example of integrating classics into its displays. It dedicates a showcase to the historical interpretations of the foundation of the city, placing an extract of the same quote from Strabo as the Museo Arqueológico Nacional, and explaining some of the stakes linked to the statements of the classical authors on the city and Tartessos in general (Figure 43). It is in fact interesting to see this use of quotes from ancient sources in museums of the central and western Mediterranean, dismantling the traditional approach to explain the archaeological perspective. In the east, this is not a prominent trend, possibly

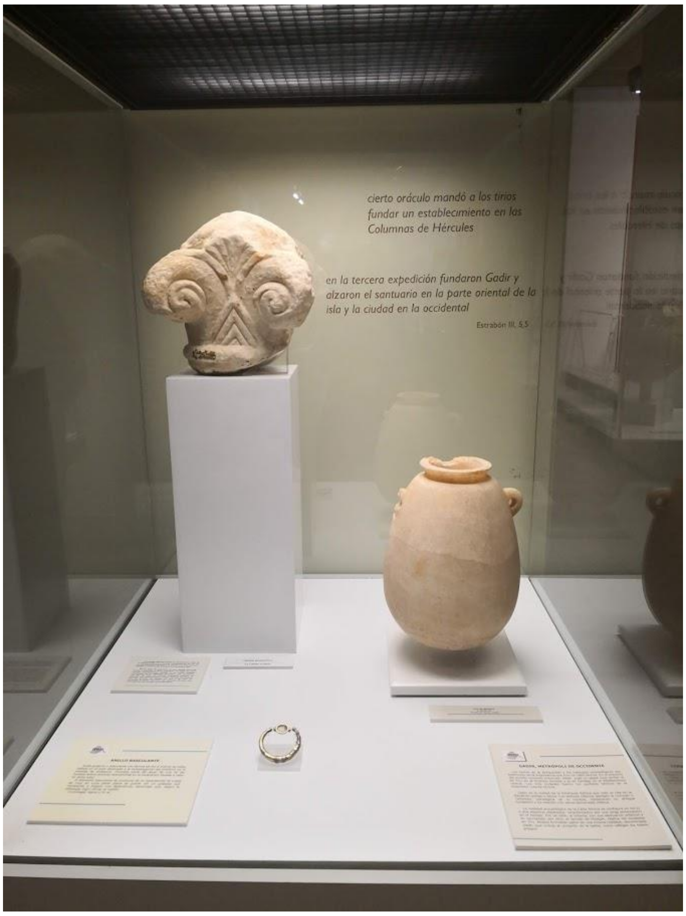


Figure 44: Showcase about the foundation of the city at the Museo de Cádiz. Photo author's own.

because of the different nature of the debate concerning the foundation of Phoenician cities, something less discussed by ancient sources overall (Niemeyer 2000, 43). This might also be an indicator of the non-prevalence of classics as a discipline in Near Eastern archaeology. In Cyprus, it is more likely due to the low amount of labelling in most museums, as the Idalion Museum (the one with the most prevalent labelling), does mention ancient sources, notably the Assyrian ones which provide the most important information about Idalion (albeit not in quote form).

The Idalion museum also has an entire large panel dedicated to the history of excavations at Idalion starting from the mid-nineteenth century, a practice relatively common in regional and site museums. To varying extents, there is some reference to the premises leading to major discoveries at the museums of Málaga, Cádiz, Marsala, Mozia, Sevilla, and Huelva. In some of these, such as Málaga, Mozia, and Sevilla, the labelling speaks of the entire Phoenician collection whereas in others it focuses on the discovery of particular artefacts or assemblages, usually the highlight of the museum. For instance, in Cádiz, a lot is said about the anthropoid sarcophagi, whereas in Huelva it is the necropolis of La Joya which is the focus, and in Marsala information is given about the discovery of the Punic shipwreck. Again, these references can take various forms - be it a few paragraphs on a panel; a mention of key personalities like in Idalion, Málaga, Sevilla, and Mozia, or quotes from said personalities. We have already seen that the national museum of Malta presents a quote by one of the iconic archaeologists who worked on the collection. In Málaga, a quote by Francis Carter is used to introduce the inception of Phoenician archaeology in Spain. Cagliari has the most recent quote, from the second half of the 20th century, by Sergio Atzeni, a journalist and writer.

The choice of quotes is rather interesting and perhaps unexpected. In general, museums seem to privilege quotes that offer a more popular or approachable view of the Phoenicians. The figures cited in museums therefore come in contrast with the key ones cited in archaeological literature about the Phoenicians. In museums, we find no mentions of Moscati or Renan (not even at the Louvre except to source objects that came from his mission) that are so prevalent in the academic Phoenician world. Instead, museums tend to focus either on quotes by non-archaeologists or by archaeologists who have been key figures in the specific sites or regions which form the centre of the displays. These are usually people who contributed to the collection through important activities of excavations or donations. As such, Sevilla focuses on Bonsor, Málaga on Schulten, the AUB Museum on Cesnola, Mozia on Whitaker, etc... In fact, most of the museums in Sicily and Sardinia are even named after key archaeologists of the region. This is interesting because it brings us back to the idea of contextuality in the museum. Although most museums use some generic quotes about the Phoenicians by the classical authors, a lot of regional ones also distinguish themselves by dedicating some interpretation space to the personalities who have had significant contributions to their collections. This also explains why it is a phenomenon more common to regional and site museums: with more

concentrated and more contextualised collections, it is more manageable to select one or two main personalities to focus on.

Through artefacts

Another way in which museums create connections through their labelling is by referring to artefacts other than the ones in the associated showcases. These can be objects in a different showcase but the same gallery, objects in another gallery but in the same museum, or objects in a different museum altogether. Some of these referrals are made more explicit than others, with the museum providing illustrations of said artefacts in order to draw attention to them. In other cases, these objects are simply mentioned within the textual labelling. Perhaps the clearest example of this phenomenon is the one provided by the Idalion Museum. This museum is composed of two main galleries; the first one of which is almost exclusively dedicated to general information about the site and its history. The second and largest gallery is the one where the actual displays take place following the curatorial path mentioned in Chapter 3. Among the many large interpretation panels which occupy the first room is one dedicated to finds from Idalion found in museums around the world (Figure 44). It details which particular artefacts from specific phases of discoveries can be found in which museums, with the ones found earlier now in international museums such as the Metropolitan Museums of Art, the Louvre, or the Berlin museums whereas artefacts unearthed in the second half of the 20th century are found in different museums in Cyprus. The museums of Idalion being the youngest I have included in the dataset, it is not surprising to find finds from the site scattered across a number of museums. It is quite interesting that the museum makes this connection with these

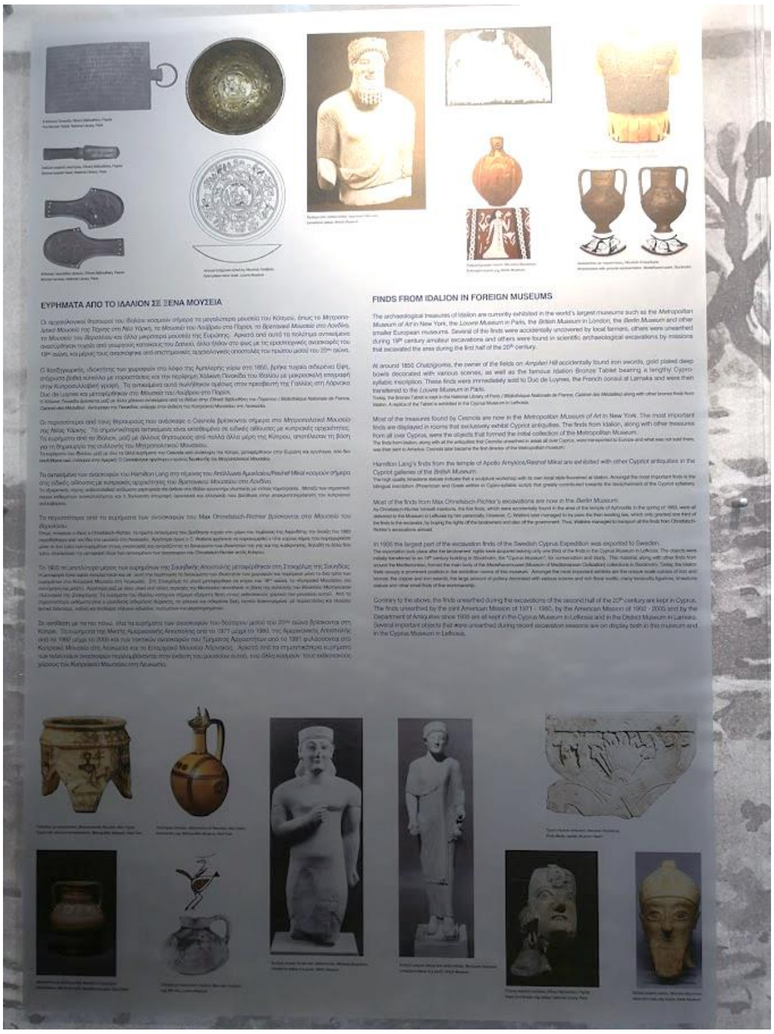


Figure 45: The panel in Idalion about finds from the site spread across the world. Photo author's own.

particular objects because they form an integral part of the understanding of the ancient city, which is essential in a site museum.

Tharros is another example of a site whose material is dispersed around many different museums. However, there is no museum on the site of Tharros, so the smallest scale museum with material from Tharros is the Museo Marongiu of Cabras. Since the museum opened in 1997, the artefacts coming out of Tharros are now systematically centralised there (Del Vais 2019, pers. comm.). However, material from Tharros has been accumulating in other museums since the earliest excavations in the mid-nineteenth century. Most notably, the collections of the British Museum and the Museo Archeologico Nazionale of Cagliari both feature significant artefacts from Tharros. At the British Museum, some of these artefacts, notably the jewellery, benefits from referrals to objects located in other showcases in the museum. I have already mentioned this when discussing curatorial choices and the contextuality that the British Museum tries to bring to its displays. Because of this, the material is associated with earlier Levantine artefacts through its individual labels. It is therefore not referred to in an illustrated manner, the same way that the Idalion Museum sends back to key artefacts. In the case of the British Museum, the focus is not on creating links between various objects from the site but between various objects from the collection. In Cagliari, the Tharros material is mostly located in the jewellery showcase of the ground floor, within the chronological division of the museum and there are no mentions of other objects from the site on the labelling. The same goes for the Museo Marongiu of Cabras, in which the Tharros gallery constitutes the main component of the Phoenician collection. However, because most of the more spectacular material from older excavations (notably the jewellery) is now in other museums, the focus of the Tharros gallery at the Marongiu museum is divided between two main areas of the site: the metallurgical artisanal quarter and the tophet. There are no mentions of the other artefacts originating from the site (despite extensive labelling) and the museum chooses instead to focus exclusively on these two main aspects. However, there are plans to build an extension which would host the material form Monte Prama, liberating room for more extensive displays of the rest of the collections, notably the Phoenician ones (Del Vais 2019, pers. comm.). Given that excavations at Tharros have still been taking place at regular intervals since the early 2000s, the museum has accumulated a wealth of material which now calls to be exhibited (Del Vais 2019, pers. comm.).

Going back to the idea of object referrals, another interesting trend that we can notice in several museums is the mention and illustration on panels of artefacts that refer to the Phoenicians, but which are not considered Phoenician collections proper. This is in fact quite a prevalent trend and it can be compared to the use of quotes from the classical sources in the sense that it creates links with external perceptions of the Phoenicians. Some of the most prominently featured artefacts illustrated on panels in Phoenician galleries are panels from the gate of Balawat (Figure 45, now at the British Museum) illustrating the city of Tyre paying tribute to the Assyrian king, as well as Assyrian reliefs showing

Phoenician warships or the transport of timber (Figures 46 and 47). These can notably be found at the Museo Archeologico Nazionale of Cagliari and at the National Museum of Archaeology in Malta (see Figure 58). It is interesting to see that this type of referral is most prominent in national museums, with smaller-scale museums making connections more specific to their particular collections, and international museums signposting other artefacts to bring their eclectic collections together.



Figure 46: Panel form the gate of Balawat showing Tyre. © Trustees of the British Museum.



Figure 47: Fragment of a frieze from Khorsabad showing the transport of timber. © Musée du Louvre.



Figure 48: Fragment of a relief from Nineveh showing a Phoenician warship. Public domain.

Purple dye

Now that we have discussed the different vehicles in which stereotypes and attitudes can be addressed in the museums, we can move on to looking at specific ones in more detail. The most obvious association made by some museums is the one with the purple dye industry and the colour purple more generally. This is by far the most visual reiteration of a stereotype, making it the most noticeable, and it is expressed beyond the textual and illustrative nature of labelling. In fact, some museums chose to use a purple theme in the design of their Phoenician galleries. This is notably the case of the Museo Lilibeo of Marsala and the National Museum of Archaeology of Valletta (Figure 48). This practice testifies to a clear intention from the museums to immediately and visually associate the Phoenicians with the colour purple. However, it is interesting to note that only two museums out of twenty use purple in their design theme. This is likely linked to curatorial paths and design policies in the museums; in Valletta, the chronological division of the galleries is complemented by the fact that each period is given its own colour scheme. In Marsala, the main focus of the museum is the Punic collection (including the shipwreck), and therefore it chooses the purple theme to reinforce this. Only

the gallery containing the Roman ship and the space behind that has not yet been renovated are exempted from it (Griffo 2019, pers. comm.). At other museums, on the other hand, the design of the labelling and galleries tends to take on a more uniform approach throughout the galleries. This is particularly true for places where the Phoenician material is spread around various locations. The lack of a centralised gallery for these collections prevents the use of a specific purple design theme exclusive to them.

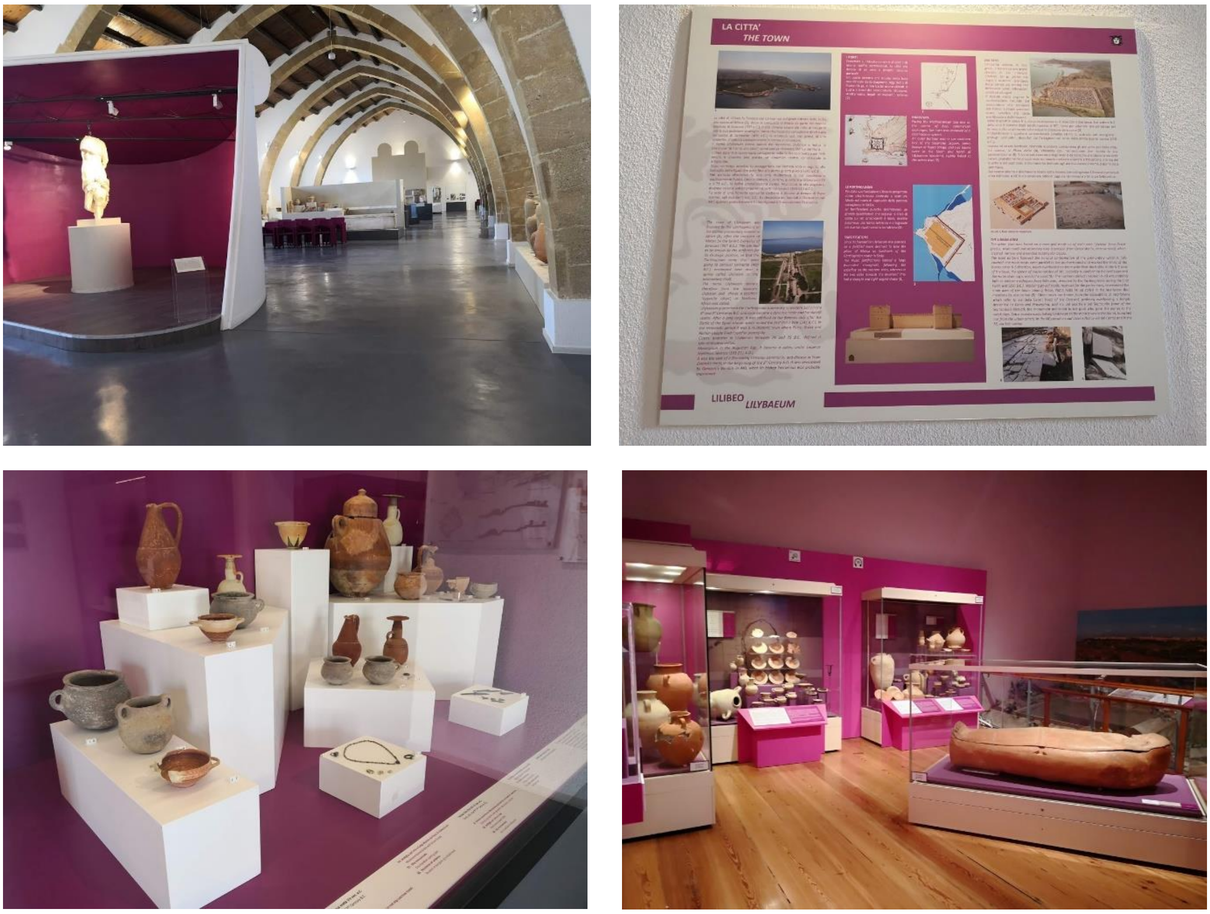


Figure 49: The use of purple in the museums of Marsala and Valletta. Photos author's own.

However, if museums do not express the association with purple in their design and colour scheme, many of them certainly do so in their displays and labelling. Sometimes, this can even happen on top of the choice of colours. In fact, the National Museums of Archaeology of Malta includes an entire showcase along with a large panel as well as a video on the textile weaving and dying industry. The showcase includes two murex shells and an experimentally dyed fabric with five shades of purple. The video details weaving and dying techniques and shows the experimental recreation. This is quite interesting because textile, an organic material, has very low survival rates in the Mediterranean climate. In fact, no textiles associated with the Phoenicians have been found to date (Gubel 2000, 202), although remains of the dye industry are attested at some sites, notably Sarepta on the Levantine coast (McGovern and Michel 1985, 1515; Pritchard 2014). The focus on organic material is therefore quite interesting because textile (through the purple dye industry) is practically the only perishable item

museums choose to focus on in their Phoenician galleries. In Malta, the museum also presents a panel on wood although there are no remaining wooden objects in its collection. In fact, the only wooden artefacts I encountered are a series of four combs of an unknown provenance at the Louvre (Figure 50) and a statuette from Olbia at the Museo Archeologico Nazionale of Cagliari (Figure 49). However, neither of these museums dedicate any particular space to wood as a material or the wood industry, and both of them place the wooden artefacts in showcases also containing many other objects.



Figure 50: A wooden statuette in Cagliari. Photo author's own.



Figure 51: Wooden combs at the Louvre. Photo author's own.

When it comes to purple dye, however, the National Museum of Archaeology in Malta is not the only one placing particular importance on the subject. For instance, the British Museum displays a couple of murex shells within its Phoenician showcase. These are accompanied by a short explanatory text about the process of extracting dye from the shells. The National Museum of Beirut and the AUB Archaeological Museum also display murex shells, this time along with an experimentally dyed piece of fabric (Figure 51). Like in Malta, both these museums have a showcase specifically dedicated to this industry. In addition, they also mention the reference to purple dye in the etymology of the term Phoenician on their main panels about the period.

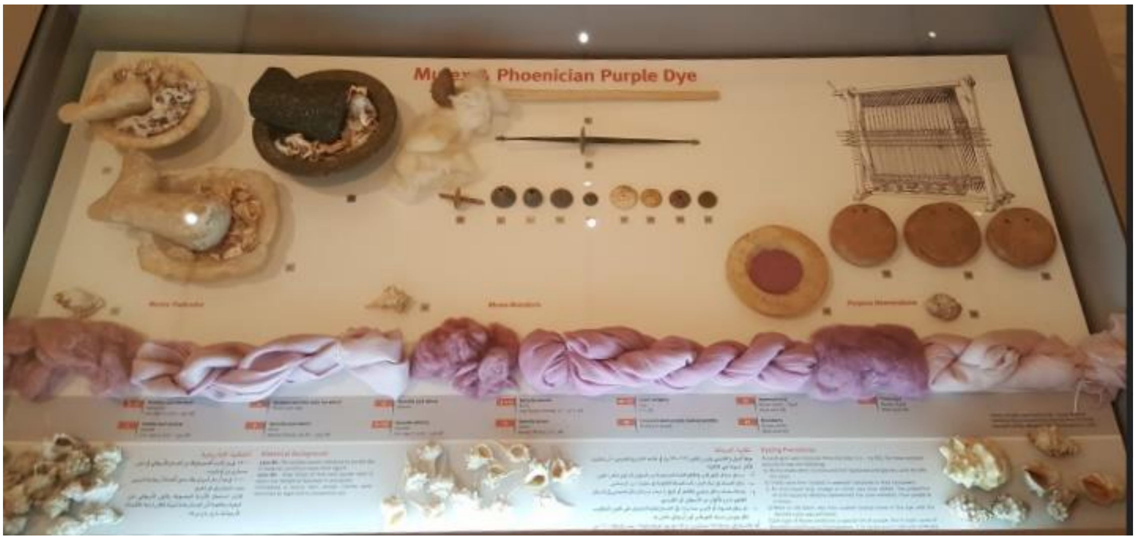


Figure 52: The purple dye display at the AUB Museum. Photo author's own.

The association with purple in a number of museums is, therefore, a phenomenon of note. I have only given examples of museums where this takes a relatively important role, but it is usually mentioned to some degree in many other museums of the dataset. This is interesting on many levels. Not only does it make textile the only organic material with such prevalence in the displays, but the visible remains of the purple dye industry are not spectacular by any means and would not really fall into the typical categories of objects museums usually consider for their displays. It consists mainly of crushed shells, and occasionally of some mortars and spindle whorls which the AUB Museum includes as part of its showcase. It is therefore even more significant that museums put such focus on purple when it does not produce anything particularly aesthetic that survives. It proves that the association between the Phoenicians and purple dye is strong enough to bypass some restrictions on the nature of objects displayed in museums. The idea that museum artefacts must be aesthetically pleasing may be an old-fashioned concept inherited from art history, but it still affects collections to some extent, and the material from excavations can sometimes be very different from what ends up on display (Scott 2006, 629). For example, fragments of pottery or slag are rarely seen in showcases. With purple dye, though, this problem is not posed, and museums do not conform to this idea. However, bringing a dyed piece of fabric into play definitely adds to the informative value of the display and also arguably to its aesthetic value.

The notable exception to the association between purple and the Phoenicians comes from Spain. In general, Spanish museums tend to downplay this idea in favour of more traceable industries particular to the Iberian landscape. In fact, the metalworking industry takes on a much more prominent space than the purple dye and textile industry in Spanish museums. However, just as with the case of purple in other museums, the focus on the metal industry is related to literary sources in museums in Spain. Notably, the classical authors and the Bible speak at length of the rich sources of silver of the Andalusian coast (Torres Oritz 2014, 253; LópezRuiz 2009, 256; Gomez Espelosin et al. 1995). This has even led to the long-standing archaeological belief that the Phoenicians expanded their colonies as far West as Spain and southern Portugal in search of precious metals, notably to retort to pressure due to Assyrian demands (Frankenstein 1979; Sommer 2007). This theory is now much discussed (see Aubet 2008 and Fletcher 2012), but metal remains the primary industry associated with the Phoenicians in Spain. This is echoed in the displays of most Spanish museums I visited, which present a much higher concentration of metallic artefacts but also industrial remains such as slag than any other museums in the dataset. In a sense, the metalworking aspect of Phoenician culture, because it has been so emphasised in Spain both historically and archaeologically, almost takes the place of the purple industry in Spanish museums. The latter almost tends to be more associated with the Eastern Mediterranean, where most remains of this activity are found (purple dye proper, as traces of the textile weaving industry are naturally attested all over the Mediterranean) (Markoe 2000, 163; Frangie-Joly 2016, 51).

The association of the Phoenicians and purple therefore takes interesting forms in museums. It is quite prevalent and can be very visual when reiterated in the graphic design of the museum. On the other hand, because it is mostly invisible archaeologically, it calls for alternative methods of displaying, from videos to reconstructions. Purple is strongly associated with the Phoenicians on several levels: first on the etymological basis of the name - although this is still a hypothetical interpretation - which is mentioned in most museums; second as a preeminent industry that falls within the realm of master Phoenician craftsmanship; and third as a typically Phoenician production, exclusive to them and rarely found in other contexts. This is a key aspect in museums that reify this association, and it is the reason why it is specifically the Phoenician part of the National Museum of Malta which uses a purple theme (while the Bronze Age gallery is green, a seemingly more random choice). The strength of this link between the Phoenicians and purple stems from literature but it is also present to some extent in the material record. In addition, the reputation of Phoenician purple lives on far beyond the first millennium BCE, and purple remains a colour associated with luxury and royalty for a long time afterwards (Frangie-Joly 2016, 51; Iluz 2014; Podhajny 2002, 20). The Phoenicians are therefore considered a pillar in the high value of purple, and this is why some museums insist on this aspect of their culture.

Maritime trade

Another prominent stereotype the Phoenicians are often associated with is the fact that they were great navigators and pioneers of maritime trade. Seafaring and trade are not necessarily linked concepts, as seafaring can take place for purposes other than commerce, notably fishing and war, and trade can be done on different scales, from simple neighbourhood exchanges to fully-fledged enterprises that can cover thousands of kilometres between the source of the raw materials, the fabrication process, and the delivery of the final product. With the Phoenician period, navigation was employed for different means and there have been studies done on various aspects of their maritime activity from warships to religion (Wood 2013; Chrisitan 2013; Woolmer 2012; Brody 1998). At the same time, commerce was not restricted to long-distance maritime enterprises. Although it can be tricky to trace shorter circuits because of the similarities in material culture between nearby sites, we can assume that this type of exchange was happening (Knapp and Demetria 2016, 153). Moreover, eastwards trade with the Assyrian and later on the Persian Empire is well attested. The means of transport of goods to the East was likely done through terrestrial or fluvial channels since these are the more direct points of contact between Phoenicia and Assyria (Elat 1991). Therefore, there is room to discuss the commercial and maritime aspects of Phoenician culture as separate cultural entities. However, they are almost invariably brought together in literary perceptions as well as in museums, which led me to pair them when discussing them as stereotypes. Maritime activity tends to be linked with the Phoenicians quite often, notably in literature. However, the association with trade only

becomes predominant when it is coupled with seafaring. This is especially true in museums, which often feature some interpretation on the maritime commercial activity of the Phoenicians. This is a much broader concept than the purple dye industry and it is therefore expressed in a different manner.

Where purple dye was only emphasised in two museums outside the eastern Mediterranean, maritime trade takes on a much more prominent position. In fact, approximately half the museums of the dataset highlight seafaring and trade as key aspects of Phoenician culture. Since maritime activity and its links to trade are the triggers for the establishment of many Phoenician colonies, it is expected that the museums with material corresponding to these sites would reiterate this aspect. However, if purple dye could be considered a particular aspect of Phoenician industry and craftsmanship (and therefore related to material-based showcases), maritime trade is not something that can be expressed in a showcase or gallery based on simple material, chronological, or regional divisions. As a result, only the museums which adopt a thematic approach in their curatorial path can dedicate a section to seafaring and trade.

However, this does not stop other museums to feature maritime trade as part of their interpretation, be it through a specifically dedicated panel or by mentioning it in the general information about the Phoenicians. The British Museum, for instance, which does not allocate much physical space to the Phoenician collections, briefly mentions that their seafaring skills led them to establish key colonies in the text of its main panel relating to the Phoenician showcase. The museum therefore communicates this association without having to create displays around it. The Museo Arqueológico de Sevilla dedicates a space to navigation on its panel about the Phoenician colonisation as well, this time, accompanying it with a map of the main sailing routes. The panel focuses on the attribution of the invention of seafaring to the Phoenicians by the classical authors. The Bardo Museum features a much larger and more expansive panel dedicated to Carthaginian trade, notably in the Mediterranean. The text details the different commercial phases of the city, the key commodities exchanged as well as the main stakeholders in this activity while emphasizing the role of Carthage as a key trading centre in the first millennium Mediterranean, hence explaining its hegemony. The Museo de Huelva also presents a panel on navigation, relating it to both the Phoenicians and the Greeks and detailing shipbuilding techniques. This panel is not associated with any objects on display, but the museum has a showcase on the commercial activities taking place in Huelva.

The trade and navigation panels and showcases at the Bardo and Huelva museums provide information that is much more related to the maritime and commercial aspects of Phoenician activity at the sites themselves compared to the general information provided by the British Museum and the Museo Arqueológico de Sevilla. At the Bardo, the panel relates maritime trade to the influence of Carthage in the Mediterranean. In Huelva, the information is even more specific as it details the origins of the various commodities traded in the city. This pattern creates a link with museum scales;

as we can see that when it comes to maritime trade, the larger international and regional museums (illustrated here by the British Museum and the Museo Arqueológico de Sevilla) are the ones to provide broader more general information while the smaller regional museums (such as the Bardo and Huelva museums) tend to focus on aspects of maritime trade more closely related to the areas their collections cover. This proves the strong association between navigation, trade, and the Phoenicians, as both museums which can create links between this aspect and the collections, as well as museums with wider narratives, emphasize this connection.

Cyprus provides further examples of specific seafaring associations. In fact, the Cyprus Museum dedicates a lengthy panel to navigation without linking it to the Phoenicians. The text details the importance of seafaring for Cyprus since the Middle Bronze Age and is related to a showcase displaying terracotta models of boats (Figure 52). The panel goes on to explain the various aspects of maritime activity in Cypriot culture through the ages, notably the religious connotations of ship figurines. Although the Cyprus Museum is a national museum, and the panel does indeed give general information about seafaring on the island, it is still linked to the physical collection. The Limassol Museum also dedicates a section to maritime trade in its exhibition about Amathus. This time, it is more specific to the site itself since Amathus was a major port and site for the trading of many commodities from an early period. Neither of these displays is explicitly relating maritime trade to the Phoenicians, and in fact the term Phoenician is not mentioned on them at all. However, there is an implicit relationship in both of them. The Cyprus Museum panel speaks of the intensification of maritime activity during the Cypro-Archaic period, which corresponds with the beginning of the Phoenician era in most Cypriot sites with Phoenician activity. In Limassol, the trade and navigation panel mentions significant imports from the Syro-Palestinian coast, or in other words the Phoenician coast. Both these museums therefore pick up on the idea of maritime trade and the momentum it gained around the time of Phoenician occupation of Cyprus without, however, putting the Phoenicians at the centre of this activity. As tends to be the trend in Cyprus, they avoid the term altogether and focus instead on a narrative centred on Cyprus.



Figure 53: Seafaring showcase at the Cyprus Museum. Photo author's own.

In Sant'Antioco, we can once again find a panel on maritime trade which is quite focused on the site itself. Finds from the site were used to determine commercial activity, and they are now distributed in the various showcases dedicated to the inhabited area and the necropolis. Therefore, despite the

predominantly regional division of the museum, key themes such as trade and navigation find their places through important panels. In fact, the panel on trade in the Museo Barreca of Sant'Antioco is rather reminiscent of the one in Huelva. In addition to making the interpretation relevant to the specific collections of the site, it also features a similar map showing the provenance of various traded objects. Once again, the panel mentions the various cultural groups with which the site had contacts, but it does emphasize the Phoenician connection over others.

Still in Sardinia, a comparable approach is taken by the Museo Archeologico Nazionale of Cagliari. Despite not having a particular showcase on maritime trade, it presents an extensive panel on the importance of commerce for Phoenician society and its expression through navigation. It notably speaks of the trading posts that paved the way for Phoenician colonisation, integrating the role of Sardinia into this network. This panel is completed by a map showing the main sites, commodities, and networks in Sardinia and the rest of the Mediterranean. In its interpretation, the museum acknowledges two key points: first that the Phoenicians have a reputation of being famous navigators and negotiators, and second that there was a significant portion of Greek imports in Sardinia despite the Phoenicio-Punic dominance. Both these ideas are interesting because they echo the classical trend of placing Greece in opposition with Phoenicia while the very perception of the Phoenicians as great maritime traders originated from Greece itself (Dougherty 2001, 46; Scott 2018, 29). Through its label, the Museo Archeologico Nazionale is both acknowledging this background and falling into the same tradition, in a similar way that monographs on the Phoenicians tend to acknowledge the flaws linked to the discipline yet do not take concrete steps to approach the data in an alternative way.[10] In Cagliari, the idea that the Phoenicians were famous for their maritime trading activity is further solidified by the use of a quote by Sergio Atzeni's *Compendio di Preistoria e Storia di Sardegna* (2016) which romantically depicts typical Phoenician trade. On a certain level, reproducing this quote shows awareness for this particular perception but on another it gives importance to the stereotype. There is a fine line between the two, and all the museums we have discussed so far try to balance it through textual interpretation. However, the importance of the maritime trade stereotypes means that it can also be expressed through actual displays. This is notably the case in the Museo Lilibeo of Marsala, the Museo Arqueológico Nacional of Spain, and the AUB Museum. Out of these, it is the Museo Arqueológico Nacional which has the most comparable approach to the one found in Cagliari. Their common nature as national museums might be what helps generate the overview approach they both take in their interpretation. Just as the Museo Archeologico Nazionale, the Spanish national museum dedicates a panel to the main lines of Phoenician navigation accompanied by a map showing the traditional routes. However, the Museo Arqueológico Nacional uses navigation as a way to introduce Phoenician

[10] While Vella addresses relevant alternatives to do so in the most recently published handbook of Phoenician studies (Vella 2019), the traditional structure remains the one adopted by its editors.

colonisation first, also pairing the interpretative text with quotes, but this time these are about the foundation of Andalusian cities and are by classical authors rather than a contemporary historian. The focus on the commercial link with navigation comes into play in the showcase entitled 'Mediterranean Travelers', where another interpretative paragraph accompanies the display (Figure 53). The showcase really highlights the commercial aspect of Phoenician culture and features various commodities symbolic of it such as ingots, ostrich eggs, and amphorae. It also contains artefacts linked with Eastern origins such as bronze figurines, a scarab, and an Etruscan ivory plaque. All this is complemented by a three-minute video bringing together the commercial and navigational aspects of Phoenician colonisation in Iberia. The Museo Arqueológico Nacional therefore dedicates significant spatial and ideological space to maritime trade in the Phoenician world, treating it as one of the most prominent features of this part of the museum.



Figure 54: 'Mediterranean Travellers' showcase at the Museo Arqueológico Nacional. Photo author's own.

In its Phoenician section, the AUB Museum also adopts an approach based on key themes of the culture, each of which has a dedicated paragraph on the main panel about the Phoenicians. Trade and navigation is one of those aspects, with the panel once again emphasizing the reputation the Phoenicians had as traders and seamen. The museum also dedicates an entire showcase to trade and navigation, its background featuring an illustration of the Khorsabad relief showing the transport of timber (Figure 54). The showcase contains various artefacts linked to commerce and maritime activity: lead and stone weights, storage jars, Greek and Cypriot pottery, fragments of inscribed jars designating their contents as olive oil, as well as carbonised grape seeds. The showcase is therefore

used in the narrative of the museum to validate the reputation of the Phoenicians as great maritime negotiators expressed in the labelling through material evidence.



Figure 55: Trade and navigation showcase at the AUB Museum. Photo author's own

In terms of material renderings of the maritime trade association, the most obvious one is at the Museo Lilibeo of Marsala where half of the exhibition space is dedicated to underwater finds. These include two shipwrecks, a Roman and a Punic one. The gallery hosting the Punic shipwreck is the first and largest of the maritime side of the museum. The partially reconstructed ship occupies a central position in it, and it has been set up in a way that visitors can walk inside and around it (Figure 55). The inside of the ship features some artefacts found on board as well as some pieces of the original structure placed back in the contexts they were discovered in. The sides of the gallery around the ship are equipped with showcases featuring more of these artefacts: series of storage amphorae, anchors, lamps, cooking vessels, and a variety of nails, wood, and other structural elements. Interestingly, however, the interpretation around the Punic ship in Marsala does not really reiterate the stereotype on Phoenicians and maritime trade. In fact, there are relatively little large general panels compared to the amount of material, and those that are there focus on the discovery of the ship and its restoration. The interpretation is predominantly contextual, with all the other labels concentrating on the finds themselves. This is quite interesting because the Museo Lilibeo is the only museum in the dataset with an actual ship and this many underwater findings, yet it does not associate these remains with general stereotypes about the Phoenicians. When we compare this trend to that of larger museums, notably national and international museums, it is clear that the larger ones are more prone to reiterating the stereotype on maritime trade. This is likely due to two factors: smaller museums have more contextual collections and therefore use their labelling space to focus on these particular contexts; and larger

museums have broader collections that need to be placed in a background which often comes from ideas and associations inherited from literary and historical perceptions.



Figure 56: The Punic shipwreck at the Museo Lilibeo of Marsala. Photo author's own.

Having said that, the Museo Lilibeo is not free of stereotypes, as we already saw with the prolific use of purple throughout the museum. Although it does not express the associations between the Phoenicians and maritime trade the same way that most museums do (through a generalised explanatory panel and a simplistic map, sometimes accompanied by a couple of foreign artefacts), the legacy of the stereotype lives there in different ways. For instance, the visitor map of the museum pinpoints the locations of some of its highlights by representing them with an icon showing their place in the museum. While most of the artefacts are symbolised by a small picture of themselves, the two shipwrecks - much less easy to photograph - are represented by drawings. What is interesting is the difference in rendition between the Punic and the Roman shipwreck: while the latter is represented by an elaborate drawing of a vessel, the Punic ship is signified by a summary and schematic icon of a boat (Figure 56). Although this difference in style may seem trivial, and is no doubt only used as a way to differentiate the two shipwrecks, it carries a weight of meanings. The more simplistic way to express the Punic ship alludes to a more primitive technology, which is probably intended; the Punic ship is six centuries older than the Roman one, and less sophisticated. However, it is important to note that Punic and Roman were also contemporary periods, and this gets erased by such representations. The difference between the symbols of the two ships is actually symptomatic of perceptions and attitudes which go far beyond museum brochures. The legacy of classics and the focus on Greece and Rome have often resulted in Iron Age Mediterranean cultures such as the Phoenicians or Etruscans to be depicted as being on their way to reaching great civilisation but still very far from it (Bernal 1987; Vella 1996; Liverani 1998; Quinn 2018). It is because of these kinds of ideas that we then find the Phoenicians/Punics treated as less advanced than the Romans in communication as small as an icon on a plan. It is even more striking that such a phenomenon is taking place in a museum like the Museo Lilibeo, which asserts Punic identity in all its communication, unlike museums in Cyprus for instance. This shows how embedded this perception of the Phoenicians is, so much in fact that even museums

with innovative displays and a clear will to be as rigorous as possible in their interpretation are affected by it.



Figure 57: Plan of the Museo Lilibeo showing the symbols for the Punic and Roman ships. Photo author's own.

The ship icon also makes an appearance in the Museo de Cádiz, but this time with another heritage and a different symbolic value. The museum uses it on gallery and showcase labels of its Phoenician room (officially called the 'Colonisations Room') to refer to that period. The actual icon is a rendition of a warship as depicted on the reliefs of Nineveh (Figure 57, see also Figure 47). It is therefore far from modern simplification of Phoenician maritime culture and it shows that the museum did not select any random image of a ship to represent this period. More importantly, it carries no meaning inherited from classical perceptions. However, the occurrence of this icon on every single showcase label in the gallery is significant by itself. It is another way to express the association between the Phoenicians and maritime trade, although the museum's structure does not provide the space for it. The ship becomes a symbol of the Phoenician period as a whole, which illustrates the power of this association.

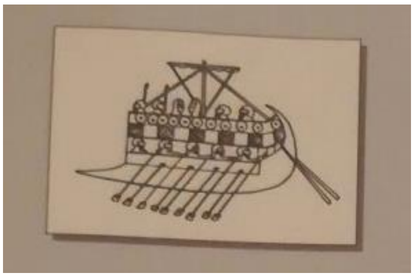


Figure 58: Ship icon used by the Museo de Cádiz. Photo author's own.

One last way in which it expresses itself is through artwork accompanying the displays. This is also an iconographical expression of the connexion between the Phoenicians and maritime trade, but it is less impactful than the ship symbols and it can often merge in the background of the museum. Going back to the Museo Lilibeo, for example, visitors can see a painting

(unlabelled) depicting a naval battle between Phoenicians and Romans (most likely) hanging in the gallery dedicated to the shipwrecks and underwater finds (Figure 58). This is not linked to any specific showcase or associated with any panel in particular but its existence in the museum is one other way to evoke the stereotype.



Figure 59: Painting at the Museo Lilibeo. Photo author's own.

Other museums also feature similar types of illustrations, although these are usually found on a panel or used as backdrops for showcases. Only a handful of museums in the dataset chose to extensively illustrate their displays, but all those that do so in a consistent way feature a drawing alluding to the relationships between the Phoenicians and maritime trade. This is the case for example at the National Museum of Archaeology of Valletta, where the three showcases focused on craftsmanship (purple dye, glass, and metal) are brought together by the illustration of a ship spanning across their front (Figure



Figure 60: The glass, textile, and metal showcases at the Valletta museum. Photo author's own.

59). The intention behind this rendering is to make it seem as though the ship was carrying these products across sea.

Perhaps less imaginative yet still evocative images of this stereotype are showcased in the Museo Arqueológico Nacional of Madrid and of the Museo de Málaga. The Museo Arqueológico Nacional illustrates its showcase entitled 'Mediterranean Travellers' with a watercolour style image of a ship loading or unloading goods, mostly amphorae. At the Museo de Málaga, the background of the showcase entitled 'The making of a city: Málaga' is also a drawing of a ship bringing merchandise ashore. The drawing evokes artefacts present in the showcase such as pottery and ostrich eggs. These two images share symbolism going beyond the fact that they had exhibition designers in common (Palomares Samper 2019, pers. comm.). They are an echo to the perceived image of the foundation of the Phoenician colonies in Iberia based on maritime expeditions linked to the transport of goods and the search for raw materials. This is strong imagery particularly in Spain because it is believed that the specific maritime and commercial traits of the Phoenicians are what led to their establishment there (Aubet 2001). Maritime trade is therefore given even more importance since it is seen as the trigger for the beginning of this entire phase of Spanish history.

Finally, the Museo Barreca of Sant'Antioco and the Museo Whitaker of Mozia both present maquettes reconstructing their respective sites. The harbour is signalled on both of these and models of ships feature rather prominently. This type of imagery may carry less connotations than illustrations designed specifically for showcases themed around maritime trade. However, it still signals the importance of this activity for each of the sites and as a key element of their Phoenician nature, especially since both museums present the sites as overwhelmingly Phoenician.

Maritime trade is therefore a stereotype reified in a majority of museums, featuring significantly more prominently than purple dye. It can be expressed through different vehicles. Some museums dedicate a showcase to it, which is usually accompanied by a panel. Others limit themselves to a panel only. Sometimes, these are also complimented by iconography reminiscent of maritime trade. No matter the way in which it is expressed, the association between maritime trade and the Phoenicians is definitely an important one in most museums. In particular, what differentiates it from the association with purple dye is its prevalence in museums of the central and western Mediterranean. This is very likely linked to the foundation stories of many of the sites in these areas, which often have to do with grandiose arrivals on ships (like in the case of Carthage for example). It is also a reflection of an academic trend which has only very recently started to be debated: the idea that the Phoenicians founded colonies as a result of their commercial activity and the search for raw materials all over the Mediterranean. Other factors such as population pressures and the need for wider agricultural land are seldom discussed in the academic world (Fletcher 2012), and as a result it is the maritime and commercial aspect which takes central stage in museums.

The alphabet

The legacy of historical sources left a great impact on the association between the Phoenicians and maritime trade in museums. As we saw in Chapter 2, another important literary (in all senses) association is that between the Phoenicians and the alphabet. Whether they are considered its inventors, predecessors, or distributors, this is something reiterated very often from the classical authors throughout the latest handbooks. As a result, it could be expected that museums also play on this aspect. And it is, in fact, just as maritime trade, an association found in at least half the museums of the dataset.

However, the alphabet seems like a more straightforward expression than maritime trade in terms of methods of display. Theoretically, it should follow a similar narrative across all the museums since it is less context-dependent, and we can expect uniformity in terms of the way museums treat this theme. Nonetheless, there is still a lot of variation in terms of how much importance museums attribute to it and how they integrate it within their displays.

In fact, a number of museums make the choice to focus on writing generally rather than the specificities of the Phoenician alphabet. This is notably the case of museums whose collections include samples from different scripts and languages, as is the case in Palermo, Madrid, and Huelva. Again, the way in which this is approached can differ between the museums. For example, the Museo Salinas of Palermo dedicates an entire gallery to writing on its ground floor. The purpose of the inscription gallery is to offer a glimpse of the different languages and writing systems used in Sicily, and more generally the Mediterranean throughout history. In addition to a general panel on writing, it features large panels about the most important scripts - including the Phoenician one. The artefacts exhibited in the gallery are composed of an eclectic mix of supports and inscription topics, from ritual and official texts to graffiti. For example, the showcase displays three finds from the necropolis of Palermo with Punic inscriptions: a gold ring inscribed with the letters Y and P; a black bowl with the name Magon; and a black bowl stating ‘May you find peace’. In addition, there is also a Punic abecedary on a fragment of a limestone slab from Selinunte. These finds, although they all share a common language by their inscriptions, are all different in their nature, which corresponds to the intention of the museum to show the many faces of writing. One is clearly funerary, another (possibly two) states ownership, and a third one is pedagogical. These are grouped with other types of artefacts with inscriptions in Greek, Neo-Punic, and Latin in order to give a glance of the diversity of writing in ancient Sicily. Visitors can therefore create their own links by comparing between the different instances.

This approach to writing is echoed at the Museo Arqueológico Nacional in Madrid. This is another case of a museum with a large collection featuring examples of different scripts. Therefore, rather than dedicating exclusive space to the Phoenician alphabet, this gets integrated in the general showcase which brings together the various Iron Age collections of the museum. Unlike at the Museo Salinas,

this showcase is not exclusively dedicated to writing, but it explores many of the main changes which shaped the Spanish Iron Age such as technology and increased contacts. As a result, samples of Phoenician inscriptions are therefore encased alongside other scripts such as Ionian, Tartessian, and the different variations of Iberian. Aside from a general explanatory paragraph, the interpretation also features a comparative table of the various scripts and a map showing the distribution of languages and scripts in Iron Age Spain.

In terms of artefacts displayed, however, an interesting phenomenon is happening. There are in fact no objects with Phoenician or Punic inscriptions on display despite the abundance of instances from other scripts. The closest example is in the form of a bronze coin from Abdera with an inscription in Neo-Punic dated to c. 50 CE. Although there are other examples of Phoenician inscribed artefacts in the collection of the Museo Arqueológico Nacional, notably a plate from the necropolis of Puig des Molins (located in the corresponding showcase) there is no real emphasis on this language. The alphabetic table clearly exposes the links between Phoenician and the other scripts, but otherwise the focus is on the more local instances.

This is probably due to two factors; the first one being the scarcity of Phoenician and Punic inscriptions in the museum's collection. This results in the curators privileging placing these artefacts in the showcases corresponding more closely to their own contexts. The first showcase on the first floor is there to create links with the different cultures, but it does so by using artefacts that constitute a sort of surplus. This is very clear if we look at two examples: one of the 'candelabras' from Lebrija (Figure 60), which features in this showcase but has identical specimens in the showcase dedicated to the site; and a gold belt plate depicting Melqart fighting a lion. This piece comes from a larger object exhibited in the showcase entitled 'The governing elites': a belt made from a multitude of identical plates (Figure 61). In this showcase, the interpretation focuses on the Oriental nature of the motif and how it was perceived as an elite good because of it. However, in the 'Novelties of the first millennium' showcase, the plate is simply used as an example of repoussé technique in metalworking. We will come back to the implications of these interpretations when discussing style, but in terms of display this clearly shows that this first showcase regroups materials that can be found again in later displays. Because there are few Phoenician and Punic inscriptions, they are not included in it.



Figure 61: The candelabras from Lebrija at the Museo Arqueológico Nacional, 7-8th century BCE. Photo author's own.

On the other hand, this exclusion could also be due to a pattern privileging the unique and local nature of the collections rather than foreign 'invasions' (like we see in Cyprus). However, given the focus on

the Phoenicians in other parts of the museum and their inclusion within the main timeline, it seems unlikely that the Museo Arqueológico Nacional would be adopting this policy.



Figure 62: Gold belt made of identical plates from Aliseda, at the Museo Arqueológico Nacional, 7th century BCE. Photo author's own.

Another museum which focuses on writing and languages in general rather than the Phoenician alphabet specifically is the Museo de Huelva. It dedicates a full showcase to the three scripts attested in the region of Huelva during the first millennium BCE: Phoenician, Greek, and Tartessian (Figure 62). The interpretation in the showcase consists of a few general paragraphs on the different writing systems and their implications in terms of the population of ancient Huelva. It also includes a map showing the spread of Greek and Phoenician language in the Mediterranean as well as a table of each alphabet. The showcase itself contains no less than 13 artefacts featuring inscriptions in Phoenician. Most of these are fragments of vessels, but there also a piece of ivory and a bone fragment. Both of



Figure 63: The writing showcase at the Museo de Huelva. Photo author's own.

these are inscribed with personal names or initials. As for the vessels, the majority of deciphered inscriptions on them also allude to property, and one of them is interpreted as a possible indicator of the content, in this case wine. So, although the Huelva writing showcase features some diversity, it is by no means as varied as the one in Palermo. This can be linked back to the scale of the museum: the context of the finds of the Museo de Huelva are not as widely spread as those from Palermo, a museum with a collection spanning an entire island as opposed to only one city.

In sum, these two museums along with the Museo Arqueológico Nacional treat writing and the alphabet as an entity going beyond the Phoenician world and expose it in a dynamic and comparative way. The diversity of their collections allows them to do so to varying degrees. Moreover, despite the fact that it is not the Phoenician aspect of writing which takes prevalence in these museums, writing is still considered a phenomenon important enough to occupy a portion of space within their narratives. In fact, the idea of literacy and its links to the beginning of history is one of the main players in museums which focus on writing and the alphabet. This can take on different expressions, as we will see with the following examples.

The British Museum, whose Phoenicians displays are part of the galleries on the Ancient Levant, features a short panel on the alphabet unrelated to any showcases. This text briefly explains the transition from cuneiform to the alphabet and the diffusion of the latter. However, the term Phoenician is not used, and the invention of the alphabet is attributed to the Canaanites. It is now common knowledge in academia that the Phoenicians and Canaanites are essentially two sides of the same coin, bearing in mind the nuances that prevent us from using the term interchangeably. Phoenician is a designation that only begins to appear in the Iron Age (hence we cannot use it to mention earlier peoples), and Canaanite seems to be a broader term covering a wider geographical area (notably the mountains and hinterland) (Kilbrew 2019, 39; Bourogiannis 2012, 38; Belmonte Alviles 2003, 30; Tubb 1998, 140; Moscati 1968, 243). However, it is not common practice to see the term associated with the alphabet in the museums. Concerning the invention of the alphabet, there is no one precise date or event to pinpoint it. It likely started to develop simultaneously at various places during the Late Bronze Age (Byblos, Ugarit, Serbait el Khadim), and was then consolidated in the Iron Age and diffused all over the Mediterranean (Bordreuil 2007, 77). The British Museum's choice to define it as Canaanite therefore makes sense because it is the most inclusive, less controversial, and therefore safer term. It allows for the nuances that accompanied the early days of the alphabet without reducing it down to the stereotype of 'The Phoenicians invented the alphabet'. However, this approach works at the British Museum because of the way the collections are set up in a compact way. Only three galleries form the entirety of its Ancient Levant collection, from the Neolithic to the Roman period. This allows for a big picture approach and the creation of links which would be too complex to explore had the museum had a more extensive and detailed collection. Therefore, while integrating writing as

an important element of its narrative, the British Museum manages to free itself of its standardized association with the Phoenicians.

The AUB Museum also allocates space to writing and the alphabet while acknowledging its pre-Phoenician history. In fact, an entire large panel is dedicated to the birth of writing starting with hieroglyphics and cuneiform and leading up all the way to Arabic. On this panel, an entire paragraph is dedicated to the Phoenician alphabet, where it stemmed from and how it spread. Accompanying it is a showcase entirely dedicated to inscriptions, as we have already seen in several other museums (Figure 63). Following this trend, it includes several examples of diverse objects, from tesserae to storage jars and tablets showing instances of various scripts. The artefact taking centre stage, however, is a stele with a Phoenician inscription. Furthering the central position of the Phoenicians in this showcase is a chart showing the evolution of alphabetic writing, with Phoenician at its core. As the panel does, this acknowledges earlier scripts such as Proto-Canaanite and Proto-Sinaitic, but it clearly shows Phoenician as the main root for most subsequent alphabets. This is therefore an interesting approach, falling halfway between comprehensive contextuality of writing and the simplified stereotype putting the Phoenicians in the middle of it.



Figure 64: Inscriptions showcase at the AUB Museum. Photo author's own.

The Beirut National Museum also provides its visitors with information on the alphabet in the form of a panel located in the lower ground floor, the space dedicated to funerary practices. It may seem surprising to find this link there but let us remember that this museum does not regroup all the Phoenician material in a single space in order to be able to place its alphabet panel there. Moreover, a staggering percentage of recovered Phoenician inscriptions are of funerary nature (Hackett 2004, 366). It is therefore a fitting space for the museum to tackle the question of writing. However, this panel does not come along a specifically dedicated showcase, and inscriptions can be found throughout the museum: from the sarcophagus of Ahiram on the ground floor, to arrowheads on the first floor, and stelae on the lower ground floor. The panel does not single out any particular artefacts

but focuses on the significance of writing in the Phoenician world and in funerary contexts. It also states that the Phoenician alphabet gave rise to the Greek one. In fact, the only artefacts which are intentionally displayed a certain way because they are inscribed are located in a showcase on the first floor. These include arrowheads but also tesserae, fragments of vessels, and seals, which they share their showcase with. This showcase is in fact dedicated to epigraphy, including sigillography. However, it does not feature interpretation beyond individual object labels. The Beirut National Museum has two non-communicating focal points in which the alphabet is highlighted. This is likely linked to the evolution of the museum, with the lower ground floor opening only in 2016 when the rest of the displays have been in place since the 1990s (Stoughton 2016; McGivern 2016). While this museum does not reiterate the stereotype too strongly, the association between the Phoenicians and the alphabet is definitely present there, and once again it is linked to the importance of writing in general. A similar approach can be found in Malta, at the National Museum of Archaeology. Despite the fact that writing and the alphabet do not have their own large panels (as many other aspects of Phoenician culture do) they still take on a particular significance. In fact, the museum features an introductory video showing Nicholas Vella, one of the principal contemporary figures of Phoenician and Maltese archaeology, giving some key facts about the Phoenicians on Malta while sailing the coast of Marsaxlokk. He ends his introduction with the following words: "Maybe the most important legacy that the Phoenicians left was the introduction of writing [...] The introduction of writing in the Maltese island marks the start of history and the end of prehistory." The Phoenician phase is therefore perceived and communicated as extremely important because it indicates the transition to history thanks to their introduction of writing and the alphabet on the island. This transition is usually considered a major shift in all contexts and it is something universal to human history. Thus, the fact that the National Museum of Archaeology of Malta makes it so clear that it happened there thanks to the Phoenicians automatically raises their impact and brings light to the association with the alphabet. In the video, Vella also briefly details the functioning of this alphabet and mentions two examples of artefacts featuring inscriptions. Both of these are displayed further along the gallery. The first is a stele from Tal Virtu standing in its own showcase and dated to the 7th century BCE (Figure 64). The other object is also from Tal Virtu but it is much more rare. It is a



Figure 65: Inscribed stetle at the National Museum of Archaeology in Malta. Photo author's own.

fragment of papyrus inscribed with an incantation (Figure 65). It is on display in a showcase alongside the amulet case it was found with and a limestone stand for an incense burner. So, even though there is no one particular showcase focusing on the alphabet in this museum, it remains an extremely powerful association. The two artefacts which express it, unlike in other museums, both come from the same type of context (funerary) which the showcases focus on as they are both located in the section of the gallery dedicated to funerary practices, but they are examples of the most commonly recovered inscriptions for the stele and some of the rarest ones for the papyrus. In Malta, the focus is therefore not on the epigraphic legacy of the alphabet or its many uses, but rather on what it means more globally for the history of the country.



Figure 66: Amulet case and papyrus at the National Museum of Archaeology of Malta, 6th century BCE. Photo author's own.

Considering the role of Malta in the historiography of Phoenician studies, however, there is one unexpected omission from the corpus of inscriptions on display. I was in fact surprised not to see one of the two cippi which served to the decipherment of the Phoenician alphabet in the 17th century thanks to the bilingual Graeco-Phoenician inscriptions they feature. However, the curator informed me that the cippus was not on show because it was meant for the Punic gallery because of its later date (2nd century BCE) (Sultana 2018, pers. comm.). This was, at the time of my visit, still only a plan for the museum. It is, however, worthwhile to note that this artefact will very likely hold a prevalent position in the Punic gallery once it opens, and it would be interesting to see what role the alphabet plays there. The cippus which completes the pair is on view some 2000km away, at the Louvre. There, this artefact is very explicitly associated with the Phoenician alphabet, and it is exhibited alongside other objects with significance in terms of writing. In fact, the Louvre has quite an interesting approach in the way it incorporates the alphabet within its narrative. Following the galleries which contain Phoenician material from Lebanon and the one dedicated to Carthage, visitors enter a room divided into two spaces (Figure 66). The main and largest space is host to collections from ancient Arabia. However, the alcove on the corner of the gallery has been recently fitted out to extend the Phoenician parcours (Le Meaux 2018, pers. comm.). The main theme in this area is the Phoenician expansion and influences in the Mediterranean. On each of the two walls there is a showcase, one dedicated to finds from Sardinia



Figure 67: The alcove dedicated to Phoenician influence in the Mediterranean at the Louvre. Photo author's own.

and Rhodes and the other to Cyprus. At the centre of the alcove is a metal figurine from Cádiz which serves as a focal point to illustrate the connectivity of the ancient Mediterranean as it exhibits both Greek and Phoenician features (I will come back to this idea when discussing style). And surrounding this statuette are the artefacts relating to the alphabet. There is therefore a double theme happening in this space, with the alphabet being used as an example of Phoenician 'diffusionism'. In addition to the fact that they are inscribed, the artefacts also bring an added dimension by their provenance or their bilingual nature. In addition to the cippus of Malta, notable ones are a libation table from Memphis and a funerary stele found in Athens. The stele is inscribed with a Greek and Phoenician inscription indicating the name of the owner (Benhodesh or Noumenios) and that he was originally from Kition. This artefact really attests to everything the Louvre is trying to tie together here: the relationships between Greek and Phoenicians, the connectivity, and the reach of the alphabet. In fact, this last point is what the general label about the Phoenician alphabet insists on: its spread in the Mediterranean and the way it gave rise to many other scripts. The association between the Phoenicians and the alphabet is therefore very strong at the Louvre, especially considering the scale of the museum and the many possible narratives it could play on. Moreover, the fact that this is a relatively recent display shows that this is not just the echo of an old idea but an association still clearly

relevant. It is therefore significant that this association between the Phoenicians and the alphabet is so prevalent there and says something about how grounded it is.

Furthermore, this can be illustrated by two cases in Sardinian museums where the interpretation about the alphabet takes more space than the finds themselves. The Museo Archeologico Nazionale of Cagliari mentions the alphabet on its main panel about the Phoenicians. Just like in Malta, it emphasizes the role of the Phoenicians in the introduction of the alphabet to the island and how this fostered contacts between locals and Phoenicians as a consequence. It also shows a table of the Punic alphabet. In terms of finds, however, there is no showcase directly associated with writing or the alphabet, as was the case in many other museums. The Nora stele, one of the most important artefacts associated with Phoenician writing because of its early date and its mention of Sardinia (Pilkington 2012, 45), is on display much further away from the main panel - on the first floor of the museum along with the rest of the material from the site of Nora. It is, however, mentioned on the main panel as a key artefact.

The Museo Barrecca of Sant'Antioco pushes this trend even further. It dedicates an entire large panel to the alphabet, located in the part of the museum hosting the Lai collection, which is the only non-contextual material on display at the museum. The sole inscribed artefact to go along with the panel is the rim of an ionic silver cup dated to the sixth century BCE, but that was not inscribed until the third century BCE (Figure 67). The inscription is a dedication to the god Baal Addir and mentions some sufetes of Sulky which allowed for its dating. The panel provides a reconstruction of the full cup, a rendering of the inscription, and a transcription to the Latin alphabet. This comes alongside a table helping the visitors understand the transcription. The panel also provides more general information about the alphabet. It mentions that the alphabet is a complex phenomenon which started to be developed in various locations prior to Phoenician times, and that the Phoenicians are given credit for its development and diffusion. This is something quite rare in museums of the central and western Mediterranean, which usually settle for a simpler view that the Phoenicians invented and disseminated the alphabet. It is therefore interesting to see a panel with this level of detail and insistence on the alphabet in another museum with no writing themed showcase, and just as in Cagliari this shows once more the tight link between the Phoenicians and the alphabet.



Figure 68: Inscribed cup rim at the Museo Barreca. Photo author's own.

The alphabet and writing are therefore considered key themes in a large number of museums. Whether the interpretation is communicated through a video, a panel, or a

showcase, and whether it focuses specifically on the Phoenician alphabet or integrates it within wider uses of writing, the association between the Phoenicians and the alphabet is always expressed to some degree - as long as there is mention of writing in the museum. Even the Cyprus Museum, which seldom uses the term Phoenician at all, makes use of it in its inscriptions gallery where a funerary slab with a Phoenician inscription is on display (Figure 68). Another notable use is that of international museums, which have a wide choice of materials to focus on when it comes to writing but still associate with the Phoenicians in particular. The association with the alphabet is therefore rooted into something which goes beyond the credit given by the classical authors which we saw with maritime trade. It brings us back to the questioning about whether the term Phoenician means something at all in terms of identity. The links with them in most museums and the never questioned nature of the language itself point to a positive answer. Of course, language is only one marker of identity (Meskell 2007, 25), and it is also assumed that Phoenician probably had different spoken dialects (Krahmalkov 2000, 6.) However, the language is one of the main things that prevents archaeologists today from getting rid of the term Phoenician entirely. Museums prove this even further by invariably labelling all materials with a Phoenician inscription as such, which, as we will see when discussing style, is not the case for all object categories. Thus, we can understand that the link between the Phoenicians and the alphabet does sometimes foster a stereotype, especially in the cases where it is extremely simplified, but its foundation is justified by material, epigraphic, and linguistic evidence.

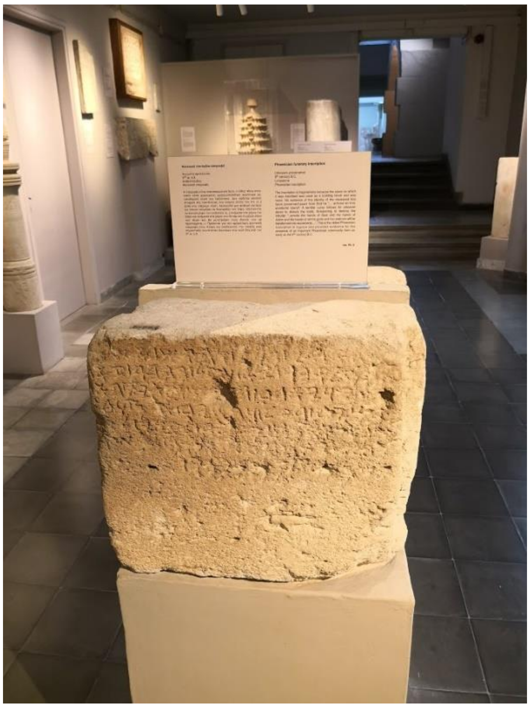


Figure 69: A Phoenician inscription at the Cyprus Museum, 9th century BCE. Photo author's own.

The tophet

Now moving on from a very widespread phenomenon to a much more spatially restricted one: the tophet. Tophets being architectural structures, I had initially decided not to include them in this study. However, seeing as some museums allocate space to the tophets, often in the form of reconstructions, it was not a feature I could ignore. Tophets are known from literature, notably the Bible, but they are only attested archaeologically in the central Mediterranean (Quinn 2011, 389). Their function has been the subject of much debate among archaeologists, and the question remains unresolved today. Technically, they are open-air spaces, often interpreted as sanctuaries, with finds consisting of stelae and urns containing remains of infants and young animals. There is a long ongoing

debate about whether or not these can be considered to be sites for the sacrifice of children or whether they are necropoli for infants (Xella et al. 2013). I will not be partaking in this discussion here as there are many resources exposing both points of views and the nuances they each entail (see Xella et al. 2013 for a summary). However, I will point out the aspects that are relevant to this research. In popular literature from the Bible to *Salammbô*, tophets have been associated with negative stereotypes of the Phoenicians. They portray them as mystical and savage, and the tophet has been one of the prevalent images in the Orientalism which accompanied the Phoenicians for a long time. In terms of archaeology, publications tend to be less passionate and romantic about this - despite the longevity of the debate. I was therefore curious to know the perspective of museums on the question, and to see how they interpret and present evidence from tophets.

First of all, it should be noted that it is rare to find a museum integrating the tophet in its interpretation when there is no archaeological evidence for one within the geographical span of its collection. This is also the case of the two international museums. The British Museum has an important amount of material from Tharros, a site that has a tophet, yet this is not mentioned in the interpretation. Similarly, the Louvre holds a large quantity of artefacts from Carthage, another site with an important tophet yet, once again, there is no focus on it at all. This is likely because international museums do not concentrate on any sort of structures, as their collections are presented in a more general dimension away from their original contexts. Therefore, the point here is not that they are ignoring the tophet but that they disregard all the architecture and topography of sites. This is most probably due to the fact that their large scale and diverse collections makes it more complicated and perhaps redundant to adopt an approach based on context or structures. When there is geographical grouping, it is done at the scale of the sites themselves.

In fact, the only museum which mentions the tophet with very sccarce archaeological evidence for it nearby is the National Museum of Archaeology of Malta. However, this mention is not unfounded. Despite the fact that no tophet has been excavated there to date, Malta falls within "the circle of the tophet", which goes through central North Africa, Sardinia, and Sicily (Quinn 2012-2013, 30). Moreover, although it was not initially recognised as such, there are hints pointing to the existence of a tophet in the area of Rabat based on an article from 1818 announcing the discovery of urns containing remains of bones as well as two stelae, one of which is the one I referred to above (Xella 2012-2013, 260). These discoveries are now considered to attest to the existence of a tophet in the area (Vella 2013, 595). The fact that the National Museum of Archaeology consecrates an entire large panel to the question of the tophet based on this little evidence shows the importance it gives to this type of space in relation to the Phoenician world. In fact, about half of the Phoenician gallery is dedicated to funerary practices, which the tophet panel adds to. The interpretation on this panel focuses mainly on the clues to the existence of a tophet in Malta. However, it also gives an overview of what a tophet consists of and of the debate surrounding it.

In fact, it is quite common to encounter interpretations focused on the debate surrounding the tophet, notably in Sardinia. The Museo Archeologico Nazionale of Cagliari, as we have seen, presents a reconstruction of the tophet of Tharros (Figure 69). The interpretative panel justifies this choice by highlighting the place of tophets in the Phoenicio-Punic world of the central Mediterranean and the importance of the tophet of Tharros. It also explains the biblical origin of the term and how this had led to the belief that they were spaces dedicated to the practice of child sacrifice, contributing to the famous controversy. In this case, however, the position of the museum within the debate is much more assumed than in Malta. The Museo Archeologico Nazionale clearly views the idea of child sacrifice as outdated and presents the tophet as a space where occasional human sacrifice may have been carried out but whose principal function was a burial ground for infants. It adds that the animal sacrifices may have been used as substitutes and that the main idea was to implore the gods for new births.



Figure 70: Reconstruction of the tophet of Tharros at the Cagliari museum. Photo author's own.

The Museo Marongiu of Cabras also features a reconstruction of the tophet of Tharros (Figure 70). This is accompanied by a large panel which also mentions that there is no consensus yet as per the definitive function of this type of space. However, this panel is much more focused on the tophet of Tharros in particular, displaying reconstructions, plans, and pictures. The bulk of the text is in fact dedicated to a long and technical report about this particular structure. This phenomenon is not

uncommon in Sardinia, especially at the Museo Marongiu where the metallurgical area of Tharros is also subject to detailed panelling. In fact, the main Phoenician gallery there is evenly divided between both these spaces. The tophet therefore takes on important meaning in the narrative presented at this museum.



Figure 71: Reconstruction of the tophet of Tharros at the Cabras museum. Photos author's own.

At the Museo Barreca of Sant'Antioco, there is no tophet reconstruction because the remains of the archaeological tophet can be seen just outside the museum. However, a third of the museum is dedicated to finds from this area, notably stelae and urns. This section also includes a large explanatory panel entitled 'The tophet in history'. It presents very detailed information not about the particular tophet of Sulky but about how the concept of the tophet has evolved through historical and literary perceptions. It mentions the key sources which have led to the early interpretations of tophets as a place dedicated to child sacrifice, notably the Bible and the classical authors. It also brings up *Salammbô*, highlighting the often purposefully negative connotations depicted by these sources. The text then moves on to the archaeological debate and clearly positions itself within it. The Museo Barreca (just as the Museo Archeologico Nazionale of Cagliari) considers the tophet to be a necropolis and sanctuary first and foremost.

In Sicily, the Museo Whitaker of Mozia is also organised by areas of the site. One of these is the tophet, which occupies about a sixth of the total museum space. There is no reconstruction because the finds are separated by materials. However, there is a large panel about the tophet. In terms of interpretation, it is the most comparable to the tophet panel of the Museo Marongiu in Cabras, with a couple of introductory paragraphs about tophets in general but majoritarily dedicated to technicalities about the tophet of Mozia in particular (again with plans, photographs, and reconstructions). The Museo Whitaker has the oldest displays among the museums which feature interpretations around the tophet, and this is reflected in the text of the panel. In fact, it does not really tackle the debate and describes the tophet as a sanctuary where child sacrifice was practised. This makes it the exception in terms of interpretation, as all the other museums mention the controversy surrounding the tophet, including the National Museum of Malta where there is no physical tophet found.

These examples clearly show that the tophet is an element of Phoenician culture worth mentioning for most museums whose collections fall within this domain. Before moving on further, it is worth mentioning Tunisia, where tophets form an important part of the archaeological landscape. However, the Bardo Museum does not refer to tophets the same way museums in Malta, Sicily, and Sardinia do. This can be explained by the fact that the archaeological collection of the Bardo is not organised by archaeological areas since it is not the main focus of the museum. We might expect the Carthage Museum to treat the tophet differently once it reopens, but for now Tunisia has to be left outside this discussion in order to avoid delving into the speculative. The fact that most museums falling within areas where tophets are attested, and barely even in the case of Malta, address this type of structure testifies to its importance within the Phoenician narrative. More importantly, what makes this even more significant is how these are interpreted. The overwhelming majority of the museums who bring up the tophet also mention the controversy surrounding it. Although this is a relatively recent academic debate, this shows the impact it has had on perceptions and interpretations of Phoenician culture (Amadasi 2007-2008). Moreover, child sacrifice is a sensational subject, which by itself enhances the attractiveness of the matter, especially for museums, which are, after all, places of entertainment. It is also rather significant that museums do discuss the debate when they have limited space allocated to interpretation and labelling in general. It shows that this is anchored enough in the Phoenician narrative to take up fundamental space. Furthermore, museums do not usually open the door to controversial archaeological explanations not only for lack of physical space but also because this complicates the clear narrative they try to present (Skeates 2002, 209). With the discussion about the tophet, some museums remedy this issue by clearly positioning themselves in the debate. In the majority of cases, we have seen that they tend to vouch for the more balanced view, which is that the tophet was a necropolis and sanctuary where occasional sacrifice may have been practised. This is important in terms of perceptions because it proves two main points. First of all, it shows that museums are quite connected to current archaeological research and they do not hesitate to take on academic ideas, even when these are still being discussed. Second, it is the indicator that they are trying to detach themselves of a long history of negative stereotypes associated with the tophets which started as far back as biblical times. Therefore, although they may be reiterating other stereotypical associations stemming from literary sources such as maritime trade or the alphabet, a few museums are actively trying to get rid of the orientalist and dramatic image brought by the historical views of the tophet.

Craftsmanship

The final stereotype I will be discussing in this chapter is the one linking the Phoenicians to highly skilled craftsmanship[11]. Once again, this is an association that starts to be made as early as the Homeric sources and is reiterated in literature (both popular and academic) until today. In fact, in terms of the history of Phoenician archaeology, craftsmanship is one of the most important stereotypes. In a way, the expectation that finely crafted artefacts must have been Phoenician because of their reputation for being skilled artisans is what resulted in the current designation of some objects as Phoenician in museums. I will discuss this historiographic aspect in more detail in the next chapter, which will focus on the invention of Phoenician style by looking at particular artefact categories. Concerning the craftsmanship stereotype, I will be taking a more general approach and focus on the overall interpretation around it.

We saw that all four stereotypes and associations discussed earlier were context-dependent to an extent. Evidence for purple dye is not very widely attested; maritime trade tends to be more emphasized in the museums of the central and western Mediterranean; the alphabet is usually discussed in relation to its impact on a particular collection/space; and interpretations about the tophet are limited to a restrained area. Craftsmanship is different in that sense because the only incentive museums need to integrate it in their narrative is the presence of artefacts in their collections. This may seem like a point too obvious to need to be made, but it explains why it is such a widespread concept in museums. Based on their artefacts, museums can discuss fabrication techniques and create links with the Phoenicians. As with the other stereotypes, there is no one unified way to do so. Some museums will discuss craftsmanship in general while others will choose to focus on particular assemblages to use as examples. However, this is usually done through panels and showcases, with museums referring to objects more frequently than with the other stereotypes.

The Louvre is the only museum mentioning craftsmanship where this does not apply. In fact, the Phoenician galleries proper, which start in room 311 have no showcase or panels dedicated to craftsmanship. However, room 301, which is dedicated to the pre-Iron Age history of the Levantine coast, and notably includes finds from Byblos and Ugarit, provides visitors with handheld interpretation boards entitled 'Byblos and the Phoenicians'. These handouts do not include a specific section about craftsmanship. However, it is made clear in the text that the Phoenicians had refined techniques for working a wide array of materials, notably wood, metal, and ivory. The latter also tend to be the artefacts that have generated early associations with the Phoenicians based on style, as we will see in the next chapter. It is therefore significant to see them emphasized at the Louvre, one of the museums with the least contextual collections and therefore the most reliance on style in terms of

[11] I am well aware of the gendered implications of the term craftsmanship, but this specific term has been used in association with the Phoenicians throughout the history of Phoenician studies, and a contextual approach must therefore acknowledge this term and work with it.

defining its material. It is also important to note that the gallery where these handouts are placed is quite far from the rooms containing the Phoenician Iron Age material (see rooms B and 17-21 on situational plan, Figure 37). It is in the same department, but part of the Bronze Age section, and so, handled by a different curator as well. The interpretation was, thus, constructed by different people than the interpretation in the Phoenician gallery. Moreover, the distance makes it likely that visitors might not relate this handout with the collections they see after having passed ten unrelated galleries, even though there is a clear effort on the interpretation board to refer to objects located in these galleries such as the anthropoid sarcophagi and metal bowls. The association with craftsmanship at the Louvre is therefore interesting because it occurs in a much less conspicuous way than in other museums. The medium of a portable gallery handout is easier to overlook than a large panel. Furthermore, the focus on craftsmanship exists in a generalised way, far from the actual artefacts to illustrate it. At the same time, it is also telling that it is on the generalised documentation that this association is created, since it shows that the Louvre considers craftsmanship to be one of the most noteworthy aspects of Phoenician culture. Having it on the general interpretation handout means it is something that cannot be overlooked, even though there is no showcase dedicated to it.

The British Museum follows a similar approach by integrating the notion of craftsmanship on its general panel about the Phoenicians. Here too, it is perceived as a key concept, worth being cited as art of the main characteristics of the Phoenicians. Once again, the most important object categories in terms of craftsmanship include metalwork and ivories as well as jewellery and glass. Within the Phoenician showcase, artefacts are divided based on material, and the stereotype about the Phoenicians being skilled craftsmen is reiterated in some of the paragraphs introducing these various materials. In the Cyprus gallery, the showcase dedicated to the first millennium features a paragraph entitled 'Phoenician influences' which also stresses their reputation for skilled craftsmanship. Considering that the British Museum has relatively few large thematic panels compared to other museums in the dataset, this repetition of the craftsmanship stereotype is a subtle way to insist upon it. To the British Museum, this aspect of Phoenician culture is clearly one of the most important ones in the narrative they are creating.

Another museum that adopts this general approach to craftsmanship is the Bardo. However, unlike at the Louvre and the British Museum, there is a large panel dedicated to it there. The text features extensive description of the different forms of handicraft the Carthaginians excelled at. The choice of terms is interesting here. Indeed, the panel speaks of Carthaginian rather than Phoenician craftsmanship. It distinguishes this particular current, noting the various influences it was subject to, including eastern Phoenician ones. This is notable because it detaches itself from the textual sources, which tend to relate fine craftsmanship to the Phoenicians more generally and do not trace any particular trends back to Carthage specifically. Even in terms of more modern archaeology, the most famous studies focusing on specific crafts focus on the eastern Mediterranean, as illustrated by the

example of the volumes on the Nimrud ivories (Barnett 1975; Herrmann 1986; Herrmann et al. 2004; Herrmann and Laidlaw 2009; Herrmann and Laidlaw 2013). The impact of these studies resulted in entirely disconnected focuses in terms of studies on ivory: Phoenician ones from the Near East (mostly based on the ones from Nimrud), Cypriote ones; and western and central Mediterranean ones (Brown 1992, 10; Winter 1976). It is therefore quite telling that the Bardo Museum purposefully detaches itself from the concept of Phoenician craftsmanship yet still presents it as a main focus of Carthaginian collections. At the same time, Carthaginian craftsmanship is said to have conquered the shores of the Mediterranean and beyond based on evidence from sites all over. It is questionable whether this material is ever called 'Carthaginian' outside Tunisia (or even Tunis itself); it seems like calling it Phoenician would be safer as long as there are no precise provenance studies made on it. Thus, it seems as though what the Bardo Museum calls Carthaginian craftsmanship can be quite closely linked to what most other museums call Phoenician or Punic craftsmanship. That said, the Bardo creates precision and singularity by using the term Carthaginian, which also makes sense since the majority of the artefacts the panel refers to are from Carthage. In terms of the categories of craftsmanship, it cites sculpture and stelae, pottery, metalworking (with a focus on bronze), glyptic, ivory and bone. These are therefore similar to the categories we usually find when it comes to Phoenician craftsmanship.

A very similar approach can be found at the Museo Arqueológico de Sevilla. There, a panel and a showcase are dedicated to 'The Orientalizing culture'. The concept of Orientalising is an extremely problematic one, and I will come back to it when discussing style in the next chapter. However, given that this is one of the museums with low frequency of mentions of the term 'Phoenician', we can assume that this is the museum's way of integrating Phoenician craftsmanship into its narrative. This becomes clearer on the text of the panel. It speaks of high-quality artefacts made from precious materials that were either imported from the east or imitated by local workshops. This presentation echoes old ideas about the Phoenicians being master artisans, especially when it comes to expensive and highly sought-after types of goods. In terms of the artefacts mentioned and exhibited, these include metalwork, ivory and fine pottery. Interestingly, however, the showcase also features examples of Greek pottery, which the museum does not separate from the other oriental artefacts. Despite the fact that Orientalizing is also a term used extensively in Greek archaeology, Greece being east of Spain could mean that Greek artefacts can make up the Tartessian Orientalizing repertoire. This is one of the discrepancies linked with the term that we will come back to later.

Some of the aforementioned categories can be stressed upon individually in various museums, still within the broader theme of Phoenician craftsmanship. The National Museum of Archaeology of Valletta provides an interesting example because it dedicates individual panels and showcases to a few of these categories. In addition, craftsmanship in general is also stressed upon on the panel dealing with maritime trade, since it is seen as the trigger for the Phoenician expansion in the Mediterranean.



Figure 72: The pottery panel and showcase at the National Museum of Archaeology of Malta. Photos author's own.

In fact, the association between the Phoenicians and craftsmanship has the strongest impact on this panel. The other four panels dedicated to specific materials tend to be more pragmatic and focus on the technical aspects of each material. This is notably the case for pottery, where the text talks about the different shapes and decorations. The showcase accompanying it provides examples of the various cases which can be matched with the chart on the panel (Figure 71). As we will see later, pottery often tends to be treated in a very systematic and thematic way, far from ideological associations. In Malta, this is also the case for glass. Here, the panel details techniques of fabrication (in both text and pictures) and talks about the most common types of glass artefacts occurring in the first millennium BCE Mediterranean. These are reflected in the showcase which presents a necklace and two alabastra.



Figure 73: Glass comic at the National Museum of Archaeology of Malta. Photo author's own.

With glass, the stereotype is not echoed in the formal presentation of the material but in a humorous way through a comic panel at the bottom of the interpretation board (Figure 72). This shows the museum's intention of playing with the notoriety of Phoenician craftsmanship, something it does more formally with other materials. The panel on metal, for example, also has information on the types of artefacts this industry produced. The showcase illustrates this by displaying a tomb assemblage consisting mainly of personal adornments. However, the text also emphasises many of the stereotypes linking the Phoenicians and craftsmanship, notably their reputation as famous metalworkers. This is emphasized by the famous passage of the *Iliad* mentioning the Sidonian krater cited on the adjacent wall (*Il.* 23.740-9). The interpretation also reiterates the idea that Phoenician craftsmanship (and notably metalwork) was a hybrid art, something which will come back to in our

discussion of style. This is not an old stereotype in the same way as navigation or the alphabet, but it is something that has been deeply rooted since the inception of Phoenician archaeology.

Old associations can also be found on the panel about wood, which reproduces a relief from Khorsabad showing the transport of cedar. The text is very clear about both the value of cedar wood from Lebanon and the reputation of Phoenician craftsmen for working it. There are no wooden artefacts in the collection of the museum, however, and this panel therefore stands in the middle of the gallery



Figure 74: The Phoenician gallery in the Valletta Museum showing the panel on wood leaning on a tree trunk. Photo author's own.

unaccompanied by a showcase but leaning on a fake tree trunk (Figure 73). The text explains the low archaeological occurrences of this material due to its nature and the Mediterranean climate. Featuring interpretation about wood is another interesting choice from the National Museum of Archaeology. We already saw with purple dye how the focus on an organic material with not much to exhibit emphasises the stereotype, and wood has the same effect. The panel adds a dimension to the other three materials focused ones and to the navigation board.

This completes the first half of the Phoenician gallery of the museum, which incorporates all the general information and the main material showcases. The faux tree trunk marks the separation between this and the second side, which focuses on funerary practices. The first half of the gallery paints a clear picture of the Phoenicians as great craftsmen, featuring different examples of their

skills. The focus on four categories added to the references made to this reputation on the general information contribute to emphasizing this stereotype.

This setup is rather unique across the museums of the dataset. Usually, the trend tends to go towards the general information mentioning craftsmanship, as we have already seen examples of, or a single panel or showcase illustrating this association based on one type of material. In the previous examples we already saw that some categories tend to be exploited more frequently: for instance, glass, metal, ivory, or pottery. The museums which focus on one showcase or panel to vehicle the association between the Phoenicians and craftsmanship usually concentrate on something relevant to their own collections. For example, metal is prominently featured at the Museo de Huelva. Since mining and smithing were among the most important activities of the region, the museum allocates significant space to metallurgy. This is done through a showcase which is quite different from usual expected museum showcases since it contains quite a lot of 'unappealing' artefacts such as raw minerals and slag (Figure 74). The interpretation in this showcase is both contextual and technical. It includes a map showing the position of Huelva on the Iberian Pyrite Belt (hence explaining the high concentration of metallurgical activity in the region). The other panel details extracting techniques for various metals, including silver and bronze. It remains very contextual in the sense that it focuses on regional products. In addition, this panel has a very scientific nature, focusing on manufacturing processes rather than conceptualisation. The Phoenicians are only mentioned once on it, not because of their reputation as metalworkers and craftsmen but to say that they were the ones to introduce iron in the region. In that sense, the Museo de Huelva distinguishes itself from others because it expresses



Figure 75: Metallurgy showcase in Huelva. Photo author's own.

craftsmanship in an entirely different way, without falling into stereotypical ideas about the Phoenicians.

The Museo Archeologico Nazionale of Cagliari is another one adopting a relatively contextual approach to craftsmanship. This museum also concentrates on a single aspect, albeit a less commonly seen one. In fact, the Museo Archeologico Nazionale is the only one in the dataset which dedicates an entire showcase and panel exclusively to jewellery (Figure 75). This is located on the ground floor, where the general chronological pathway of all Sardinia forms the bulk of the organisation, and not as part of a site-focused display such as the ones that occur on the upper floors (even though most of the material in the jewellery showcase comes from Tharros). The artefacts presented inside the showcase include earrings, necklaces, and bracelets, but also ivory and bone amulets, a bronze mirror, and a necklace made of large glass face beads. In this way, it differs from material specific showcases we have encountered in other museums, since it focuses on a category of artefacts that can be expressed through different media. As a result, the interpretation is not solely focused on techniques, although some of these such as filigree, granulation, and incision are mentioned in the text. However, they are not explained in detail, and the panel dedicates the rest of the space to providing information about the other types of artefacts in the showcase. In addition, it also alludes to the craftsmanship skills of the Phoenicians through jewellery, associating them with finely crafted artefacts. At the same time, the narrative remains quite contextual since it specifies that jewellery making was an important



Figure 76: The jewellery showcase in the Cagliari museum. Photo author's own.

Sardinian tradition, noting that some of the trends and techniques came from Egypt and the east but that specialised workshops then developed from this point (notably Tharros). This museum therefore integrates the association between the Phoenicians and craftsmanship in a narrative that is meaningful to its own collection.

To a lesser extent, this is also the case of the Museo Arqueológico Nacional in Madrid. There, the idea of craftsmanship is not especially stressed upon in the Phoenician section. However, it is mentioned as part of the large showcase which marks the introduction to the protohistoric period. This showcase has mixed materials from various parts of the Iberian Peninsula, and we have already seen the role it played with the alphabet. In terms of craftsmanship, it adopts a similar approach. This time, the material in focus is pottery, and the role the Phoenicians play in the narrative is the fact that they introduced new ceramic technology – notably, the potter's wheel. This is key because it marks the first step of widespread development all over Spain at the time. The Phoenicians therefore once again, play this role of kick-starters. Contrary to what is happening with navigation, the Museo Arqueológico Nacional mostly leaves aside the reputation of the Phoenicians as craftsmen to focus on the technological aspect. There is still something of this idea of evolution and superiority on the pottery panel, but it is not as strong as in other cases.

We have seen that craftsmanship is one of the most variable stereotypes to integrate within museum narratives in association with the Phoenicians. The way in which it is expressed is linked to the broader structure of the museum and the composition of its collection. As such, larger museums usually have more generalised interpretations of craftsmanship. These are the ones that tend to be the most reminiscent of stereotypes we find in the literature. Smaller and more focused museums on the other hand, usually adopt a different approach centred on specific artefact categories. The craftsmanship stereotype has implications that go beyond all the others because it is intrinsically linked to a stylistic approach to artefacts in many cases. As we have seen, some museums adopt a more technological point of view when discussing craftsmanship. These tend to be unproblematic cases which translate a contextual paradigm into their displays. However, those that play on the refined, oriental, or hybrid aspect of Phoenician craftsmanship are far more controversial. We will be coming back to all these concepts in detail in the next chapter, but it is important to note this ambivalent nature of the craftsmanship stereotype.

Building narratives

In this chapter, we have explored the narratives created by museums, especially based on the main stereotypes they reiterate (or not). I have chosen to focus on specific stereotypes connected to the Phoenicians here rather than more broad themes such as funerary customs (which are definitely present in a lot of the museums) because these are the more impactful in terms of perceptions of the Phoenicians. While analysis of how themes such as funerary practices, religion, or domestic life are

treated in the different museums would certainly be interesting, my aim in this study is to understand how perceptions of aspects specific to the Phoenicians have shaped museum displays, hence the focus on stereotypes. It is particularly interesting that the stereotypes we find reiterated in museums are often the same ones that have been associated with the Phoenicians in literary sources from early on. It shows that despite their connexion with up-to-date archaeology, museums still often find themselves falling into easy narratives dictated by these associations. However, we saw in Chapter 2 that even some of the most recent monographs about the Phoenicians adopt this type of stereotypical classifications, which means museums cannot take the full weight of the blame here.

Moreover, the stereotypes mentioned in this chapter are all the result of external perceptions. This exacerbates the factor of foreign influences and brings in the question of representativity. With museums usually trying to be as objective and cohesive as possible, how can a narrative mostly based on external stereotypes be truly representative of Phoenician history? Politics of representation are a highly complex subject going far beyond the scope of this thesis. There are many examples of this debate based on case studies of ethnographic collections (Simpson 1996; Insoll 2007; Anico and Peralta 2009; Dudly 2010; Chambers et al. 2016). In the case of archaeological ones, the distance of original context makes full representation almost impossible. Instead of focusing on unsolvable questions, I chose to analyse the use of stereotypes by museums from a different perspective. In fact, if a museum is integrating stereotypes within its narrative, this is a conscious choice. Curators are clearly aware that these ideas of the Phoenicians stem from external points of view, and this can be seen in the museums. For instance, many museums make a point of specifying that the term 'Phoenician' itself is a Greek designation and not an internal representation. Having displays based on stereotypes is another way to express the external perceptions which have been so important in Phoenician historiography. This was in fact very clear in the case of the tophet, where museums invariably mentioned the controversial function of the space both in literature and in academia. This is therefore a way of demonstrating how ideas from the outside have contributed to creating interpretations. In a sense, showcasing stereotypes generates a narrative in which the Phoenicians are put in the light by which they are best known: that of external perceptions. Because most of what is known about them comes from outside sources, and because these sources have created associations which subsequently became invariably tied with the Phoenicians, museums can create a meta-narrative that includes both a stereotypical image of Phoenician culture and the external lens through which it came to be.

Having said that, it must be noted that this approach is only taken in museums which adopt some of the stereotypes, and even then, to a variable extent depending on the museums. Unlike the cues discussed in the previous chapter, which all affect the museums to varying degrees, stereotypes are only found in a portion of the museums in the dataset. There is, in fact, a trend to recognize when it comes to the reiteration of stereotypes. First of all, we can notice that they are almost entirely absent from Cyprus. The only instances we saw were with maritime trade and this was treated more as

thematic displays tied in with the broader museum than as specific Phoenician attributes. There is a simple explanation as to this scarcity of stereotypes in Cypriot museums. It ties back to the general rendition of the Phoenician period there, which is much less prominent in the global narrative of most museums, as we saw earlier. Therefore, with less focus on the Phoenicians overall, museums in Cyprus have fewer opportunities to exploit stereotypical ideas.

However, there is one museum in Cyprus which does integrate the Phoenicians into its narrative: the Idalion Museum. In spite of this, there are still no traces of stereotypes in this museum, and the reason behind this goes back to its scale rather than the national narrative. Throughout this chapter, appearances of site museums were relatively rare because they are the category with the least amount of stereotypes. When they do mention some of these associations, for example like in the case of the Museo Whitaker with the tophet of Mozia, it is usually in a way that is directly linked with the site and the contextuality and therefore reduces the controversy.

It can also be noted that all the stereotypes found in museums are translatable in terms of material culture. In other words, museums will only reiterate stereotypes when there is something to relate them with in the displays. For example, the reputation of the Phoenicians for being cunning and deceptive is touched upon in some interpretation boards about navigation but not explored further than this. Because smaller museums have a set narrative focusing on the site, they do not have as much room to feature showcases catering to stereotypes. Larger ones who try to give a more general overview have more room for this type of thematic display. This is well illustrated by the case of the National Museum of Archaeology of Malta, which reiterates every single stereotype discussed in the chapter. In a different repertoire, the Louvre and the British Museum use stereotypes as quick qualifiers and as a way to distinguish the Phoenicians from other civilisations they present in their museums.

In summary, what we can infer from the use of stereotypes in museums is that they are intertwined with the collections to form narratives. Therefore, not all stereotypes are relevant to all museums. We saw that purple can be interesting as a rare representation of an organic material and a colour scheme in some museums. The alphabet is a theme common to all areas, making it the most prominent Phoenician association, whereas maritime trade is featured more frequently in the central and western Mediterranean because of its impact there. The tophet is also limited to the areas which have material evidence for it. Finally, craftsmanship is touched upon in most museums but with great variability in the way it is expressed. In general, the trend seems to be that the museums with the most contextual collections and narratives - site museums- tend to have the least stereotypes. On the other hand, the largest museums are where the stereotypes are expressed in the most general terms. What we can draw from this is that contextuality downplays stereotypes, which can almost act as a filler in museums with eclectic collections. Integrating associations into the narrative can help bring all this material together under one umbrella. The idea of contextuality is therefore a key concept when

dealing with Phoenician material. Not only does the context of each museum affect its treatment of stereotypes, but the level of contextuality within the collection also plays a role in determining what associations will be privileged in the narrative. This applies to stereotypes, but we have formerly seen that it also applies to the cues which affect patterns of displaying in the museums. In the next chapter, we will pursue this even further by looking at the idea of style, and how decontextualized artefacts have come to be considered Phoenician. While the previous chapter focused on the general layouts of the museums and this one concentrated on stereotypes and associations rendered through labelling and interpretations, the next and final chapter in this museum analysis will look more closely at artefacts and assemblages in order to assess perceptions of what constitutes a Phoenician object.

Chapter 5 | Style

Style at stake

In the previous chapters, we reflected on trends and stereotypes at the level of the museums and the interpretation they present. To bring this part to a close, I will now be focusing on the artefacts themselves by looking at one of the main determiners for their designation as Phoenician: style. To put it roughly, there are three ways in which an artefact can end up with the label 'Phoenician', be it as an individual object or as part of an assemblage in a showcase or gallery. The first one is if it is inscribed in Phoenician, the second is if it originates from a sound archaeological context, and the third is based on its appearance and attributes.

The first two are unproblematic. We have already seen that the use of the term 'Phoenician' to refer to inscriptions is clear and non-controversial, and that Phoenician language is one of the least disputed aspects of Phoenician identity (Quinn and Vella 2014, 7; Amadasi 2019, 200). Therefore, even in the case where an artefact has been acquired by the museum in a completely decontextualized way, as is the case with the cippus of Malta at the Louvre, which was offered to Louis XVI in 1782 and then donated to the museum two years later (Briquel-Chatonnet 2012, 626), the inscription it holds allows for its designation as Phoenician.

In the case of artefacts coming from excavations, this is also relatively straightforward. Of course, a site is determined to be Phoenician based on the artefacts originating from it, which could seem like circular logic; however, it is the sum of the material along with the contextual information which leads to the interpretation of it and the eventual designation as Phoenician. This is therefore the result of careful interdisciplinary studies, and not something done based on a single object.

Moreover, as we saw when discussing the frequency cue, it should be noted that despite this, some museums are reluctant to use the term 'Phoenician' as a general designation because of the complexity of the archaeological record and the need to remain as inclusive as possible. This is notably the case of museums in the western Mediterranean such as the Museo Arqueológico de Sevilla which has to take into account the connectivity between locals and Phoenicians; but also of museums in the east, such as the National Museum of Beirut which speaks of the Iron Age as a whole rather than focusing on identity groups. As a result of the straightforwardness of collections originating from contextual excavations, site museums should be a less prevalent group in this chapter.

The focus of this chapter will therefore be on objects which have been called Phoenician without holding an inscription or originating from a secure context. Categorizing these artefacts has then been based on their appearance and typological attributes, or in other words, their style. Before delving deeper into a historical overview of the fabrication of Phoenician style and its implications in terms of museum displays, it is important to place this work in its theoretical context. The primary and most basic dictionary definition of the word style (OED 2019) is "a kind, sort, or type, as determined by

manner of composition or construction, or by outward appearance". According to this definition, style is an attribute of things, it is a consequence of a process, a passive concept. It is in its archaeological application and definition, however, that style takes on an entirely different meaning. The discipline of archaeology - particularly in the Mediterranean - emerged from a mixture of classics, art history, and antiquarianism. Style was a concept initially inherited from art history (Conkey and Hastrof 1990, 1; Wicker 1999, 163), which had explicit codes corresponding to their respective currents resulting in clear documentation of different artistic and architectural styles such as gothic, baroque, or rococo. In its art-historical definition, style remains a passive concept, responding to certain pre-set principles and guidelines. Art history may have given archaeology the legacy of working with style, but the manipulation of style commonly practised in archaeology is the result of a much more complex phenomenon.

In the early days of archaeology, the inheritance of antiquarianism is reflected in the archaeological methodology practised prior to the spread of structured excavations. Upon encountering material on the market, early archaeologists applied the concept of style as borrowed from art history to categorise groups of objects and ascribe them to specific cultures (Trigger 1989, 38). This practice was widespread because of the legacy of connoisseurship in antiquarianism. Connoisseurship refers to one's deep knowledge and quality of recognition of certain objects and currents, particularly in the art world (Feldman 2014, 20). It is usually acquired by experience and is a major contributor in allowing antiquarians and dealers to distinguish authentic material from copies. Although it may seem dated to the 21st-century archaeologist, connoisseurship is a concept still much valued today in auction houses and even certain museums and private collections (Neer 2005, 2). More importantly, it shaped the way many collections are now identified, including Phoenician ones (Feldman 2014, 179).

Coming back to the context of 19th-century Europe, artefacts were circulating on the market and in collections, and the discipline of archaeology was starting to develop through these materials. Despite lacking archaeological contexts, most of these objects were not merely treated as works of art. In fact, early archaeologists were quite familiar with the classical sources, which were extensively studied at the time. Arguably, these early scholars had the best knowledge of these texts: the fact that there was less material than today to study allowed for a broader yet still deeper understanding of the sources. This also meant that scholars were also able to specialise in more than one time period, region, or civilisation, as illustrated by the example of Perrot and Chipiez who produced volumes on Greece (1894), Egypt (1883), and Phoenicia (1885), something that would be unthinkable today. The heavy reliance on the classical sources and the capacity for broad knowledge triggered one of the most significant advances in archaeology, but also one of its biggest handicaps. In the face of (pseudo) historical evidence, scholars began to look for sites and materials to match the textual evidence. From Troy to Málaga, this is how many sites began to be excavated, and archaeology evolved from there (Diaz-Andreu 2007, 107).

While this was at the root of the discipline of archaeology itself, trying to associate material remains and text quickly proved to be problematic in more than one way (see for example Duesterberg 2015 on Troy). First, we must consider the issue of dating and the fact that archaeological finds do not always answer to textual evidence, and often trigger more questions than they provide answers. This is clear in the example of Tartessos, mentioned by the classical authors and interpreted as an area of the southern Iberian Peninsula. Some of the Greek and Latin authors place the foundation of Cádiz as far back as the 12th century BCE (Aubet 2008, 168). However, and despite extensive excavations in the area, the earliest remains indicative of a permanent settlement cannot be dated prior to the 9th century BCE (Niemeyer 2000, 97). This example also illustrates another of the issues going hand in hand with attempting to associate text and material, that of the interpretation of both textual and material evidence. History and archaeology are both interpretation sciences, and despite the best efforts of processual archaeologists, they will never be able to reach universal truth and render a perfectly accurate and objective narrative. With the case of Tartessos, it is clear in the material record that there were pre-colonial contacts between the Phoenicians and the southern Iberian Peninsula prior to the 9th century BCE. What will never be certain is whether the classical authors were referring to these exchanges when they wrote about the foundation date, many centuries after it, or whether this was part of an amplified and inaccurate narrative (purposefully or not), illustrated by many other fallacies. Moreover, the fact that some historical sources are inaccurate is not always accidental or coincidental. One of the key concepts of history is that any historical text can never be fully representative of any situation because of bias. There is no history; there are histories - hence the necessity of working with a variety of sources (Meirion Jones and Alberti 2013, 15). Unfortunately, however, as we have already seen, primary sources are a rarity in the case of the Phoenicians (Markoe 2000, 110), which led many archaeologists and historians to focus on other ancient texts mentioning them in order to help define Phoenician culture despite their obvious shortfalls (see Chapter 2).

The process of borrowing the idea of style from art history, applying it to materials emerging on the antiquities market, and associating material evidence to historical sources is what truly shaped the use of style in archaeology. Through this process, style shifted from a passive concept dictated by pre-set codes to an active agent guiding interpretations and defining identities (Sassine in press). Phoenician archaeology, in particular, provides an excellent example of this paradigm.

Fabricating Phoenician style

In Chapter 2, I provided an overview of the evolution of Phoenician archaeology from the 17th century until today. The first peak of interest for the Phoenicians took place in 19th-century Europe, a crucial framework to focus on in order to properly understand how the concept of 'Phoenician' has been shaped. The idea of a Phoenician style, specifically, really starts to emerge during this time. As mentioned above, the 19th century also witnessed the first steps towards modern archaeology. The

parallel development of the general discipline along with that of Phoenician studies in particular, is interesting because of the way in which one informed the other. Had the interest in the Phoenicians begun later, in a more established archaeological world, it is likely we would have ended up with a very different understanding of them than we do today. The history of Phoenician style, especially when it comes to material culture displayed in museums today, can therefore not be limited to Antiquity.

The first thing to note about early Phoenician studies (Movers (1841), Kenrick (1855), Clermont-Ganneau (1880), Perrot and Chipiez (1885), and Rawlinson (1889)) is that they are almost invariably based on finds without a secure archaeological context - the only exceptions being Renan who attempted to explore half a dozen sites within a year (1864, 3) and Clermont-Ganneau whose study is based on a single contextual find. This means that the material which has shaped the first definitions of Phoenician style and identity, some of which is still displayed as such in museums, was based on 19th-century ideas of style rather than sound archaeological contexts. This is most notably the case of the famous metal bowls, extensively mentioned in the literature and now featured in museums: the ones from Cyprus are distributed between the Louvre and the British Museum, and the specimens from Praeneste are in the Museo di Villa Giulia (Figure 76). At the Louvre, the bowl from Idalion on display in the Cyprus gallery is not currently called 'Phoenician', but it has been categorized as such in literature (Markoe 1985, 169; Fontan and Le Meaux 2007, 342). The only other metal bowl on display at the Louvre is an acquired specimen from Sparta, exhibited in the gallery showcasing Phoenician and Punic influences in the Mediterranean[12]. This one is compared to the Cypriot examples and directly



Figure 77: A metal bowl from Idalion, 8th century BCE, now at the Louvre, and a metal bowl from Praeneste, now at the Etruscan Museum of the Villa Giulia. © Musée du Louvre/ETRU.

[12] It was, however, not on show at the time of my visit because of its bad state of preservation.

called ‘Phoenician’ by the museum. The metal bowls at the British Museum are also categorized as Phoenician by their presence within the Phoenician showcase.

There have also been cases of other types of artefacts mentioned by 19th-century authors as a typical example of Phoenician style, but which are no longer considered so. This is for example the case of a necklace from Kourion mentioned by Rawlinson (1889, 342) and acquired by the British Museum in 1897 (Figure 77). This necklace is now on display in the Cyprus gallery, although not in the showcases which contain material linked to the Phoenicians. The online catalogue classifies it as Roman and the only potential relation to the Phoenicians it creates is listing the Levant as a potential production place (Necklace, n.d.). Since the material from Cyprus was grouped with the Phoenician material until 1917, when the shift to the department of Greece and Rome occured (Kiely 2018, pers. comm.), we can assume that this necklace was probably exhibited as Phoenician until then and that this was later revoked, which led to its current place in the museum's narrative. This case shows the impact of haphazard early attributions of a Phoenician identity to artefacts and how this affected their placement in museums. The necklace is but an isolated example of this phenomenon and it is probable that some artefacts retain their 19th-century identification today, whether rightfully or not.



Figure 78: Gold and garnet necklace from Kourion, 2nd century CE, now at the British Museum. © Trustees of the British Museum.

A common characteristic of all the early studies of Phoenician material is its perception as artistically inferior and hybrid. To these authors, who dealt with archaeological material as artistic collections, Phoenician art was a predecessor to the apogee of art history, represented by Classical Greece, while never achieving comparable potential (Rawlinson 1889, 136; Perrot and Chipiez 1884, 1). As Rawlinson (1889, 263) puts it: “What is superior has the appearance of having been borrowed. Egyptian, Assyrian, and Greek art, each in turn, furnished shapes, designs, and patterns to the Phoenician potters, who readily adopted from any and every quarter the forms and decorations which hit their fancy[13].”

[13] It is worth noting though that Winckelmann, who can be considered one of the pioneers in terms of the use of style, while not dedicating much space to the Phoenicians was an admirer of their art (Winckelmann 2006, 147).

The concept of hybridity is key to understanding the formation of Phoenician style and its roots in antiquarianism, classics, and art history. To put it simply, scholars encountered material outside archaeological contexts, or through a secondary encounter, having not excavated in their sites of origin, such as some of the famous metal bowls (Markoe 1985)[14]. They were then perplexed by their composite nature which included elements they were familiar with from the Greek, Assyrian, or Egyptian repertoires, albeit not treated in the way they expected (Rawlinson 1889, 175). At the same time, these authors were familiar with the image of the Phoenicians as portrayed in the ancient sources, notably as skilled craftsmen, navigators, and merchants. This association was therefore paired with the strangely hybrid objects that were encountered all over the Mediterranean, which led to the creation of Phoenician style. For these authors, the Phoenicians, through their skills in craft, trade and navigation, were in a position to pick up on elements from the various cultures surrounding them, bring them together, and distribute them (Vella 2014, 32). This resulted in a perception of Phoenician style as a composite and hybrid phenomenon, not always fully understood. The implications of this are varied and consequent, and we will be addressing them throughout this chapter.

For now, let us focus on the other main characteristic of Phoenician style according to the pioneers of Phoenician archaeology: inferiority compared to Greek art. The paradigm of Greek superiority has been well established since the Renaissance (Bernal 1987). As a result, Phoenician material was automatically seen as lesser ever since it was first studied. This resulted in the neglect of some artefacts which were considered less interesting while others such as ivories and metal bowls took the spotlight (Martin 2017, 95). Although these objects have been heavily studied, they do not always feature prominently in museums, which is a noteworthy contrast. For example, out of a total of twenty museums, I encountered only a few metal bowls on display with Phoenician material. Of course, this is partly due to their widespread distribution which meant that they were not all included in the museum dataset, but even the way they are displayed does not single them out from other materials. For instance, no museum isolates a metal bowl in its own showcase or dedicates any particular ideological space to this type of artefact. This is therefore a particular case of discrepancy between archaeological literature and museums: while metal bowls have been the subject of countless studies (Clermont-Ganneau 1880; Markoe 1985; Matthaus 2008; Onnis 2009; Vella 2010; Feldman 2014 to cite a few) museums tend to display them relatively discreetly in comparison to the scholarly attention they generated.

In Chapter 2, I touched upon the way that volumes on the Phoenicians have historically discussed artefacts based on material categories, a legacy which made its way to even the most recent

[14] Most of the metal bowls encountered in this study were located at the Louvre and the British Museum (through acquisitions), as well as museums of Cyprus and Spain (following exacavations).

handbooks. While the renewed wave of interest for Phoenician archaeology which took off in the seventies was in part a delayed consequence of the aforementioned neglect, it carries with it the weight of a long history of classification. In Chapter 3, we also saw that some museums follow this material-based organisation in their curatorial pathways. Material grouping in museums is a tendency which transcends Phoenician collections, and my goal here is not to lay out the pros and cons of this type of classification. However, I will not be following a structure based on material categories for this chapter. The primary reason for this is that it would be unwise to propose a new perspective on Phoenician material which follows the same structure all major works on the Phoenicians have. A different angle is needed in order to detach from the existing interpretations and be able to analyse them.

Moreover, we have just seen with the example of metal bowls that archaeological literature and museums do not always have the same approach when it comes to materials they focus on. Therefore, when museums group assemblages by material, they do not necessarily do so in correspondence with what sparked the most academic interest, even though this may have been the case in the past.

In addition, there are several examples within the Phoenician repertoire which prove that this type of categorisation can be misleading. In fact, artefacts made from the same material do not always have the same function. To stay with a well-known case, ivories can be used as furniture fittings, which is what most studies predominantly focused on, but they can also be games, ornaments, or amulets (Winter 1976, 4; Caubet et al. 2007, 205). Terracotta figurines also present a similar issue: the diversity of contexts they are found in alludes to a diversity of functions, from votive purposes to toys (Badre 2007). In some cases, they can also be similar to figures engraved on stelae. Stylistically speaking, there are also many different types of terracotta figurines, which makes it difficult to treat pregnant breast holders the same way as tambourine players (Figure 78). Finally, their distribution in sites and museums also presents challenges to grouping them together: they are very frequent in Carthage, the

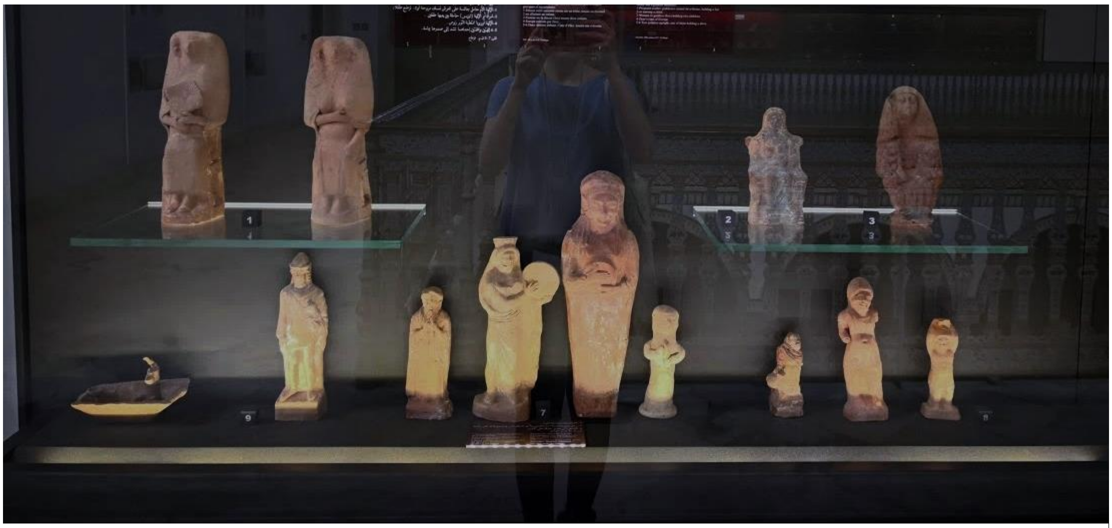


Figure 79: A display of terracotta figurines at the Bardo Museum, showing both tambourine players and pregnant figures. Photo author's own.

Levantine coast and Cyprus (where they start being produced far earlier than the time of Phoenician occupation), but much less so in the Iberian Peninsula. These factors all put a dent in working with all terracotta figurines as a sample of Phoenician style and identity and encourage a more contextual and localised approach.

Furthering this decision is the fact that some categories of objects cross between different materials. Censers, for example, are attested all over the first-millennium BCE Mediterranean, but they come in a variety of shapes and materials (Franz 1999; Morstadt 2015; Saez-Romero and Higueras-Milena Castellano 2016; Parra 2018). The types most prominently showing up in Phoenician collections are clay incense burners in the shape of female heads, bronze thymiaterions (often associated with Cyprus), and double bowl censers which could occur in either metal or clay (Figure 79). These different types of incense burners often coexist in sites and museums, showing that they cannot be singled out by material, object category, or style, but that they are part of a larger and more complex system.



Figure 80: A 7-6th centuries BCE clay double bowl, now at the British Museum; a 4-2nd century BCE clay female shaped incense burner, now at the Museo Arqueológico Nacional; and an 11th century BCE bronze thymiaterion now at the Cyprus Museum. Photos author's own.

Another case to support this is red slip pottery, one of the symbols of Phoenician identity in archaeological literature. This type of pottery strongly supports a case for a common guiding thread in the Phoenician world (not to delve into the pots equal people debate here), first appearing around the 11th century BCE on the central Levantine coast and gradually making its way on all shores of the Mediterranean (Bikai 1989, 204). I will return to the implications of this spread in the last part of the chapter, but the reason I mention red slip pottery here is because it has been speculated that it could be an imitation of metal vessels (Schreiber 2003, 58; Fletcher 2006, 181). In fact, there are many crossovers between containers and vessels, not only with surviving materials as demonstrated by red slip and metal, but also with artefacts made of organic materials such as leather or basketry (Drooker

2000). This shows once again that red slip pottery, although it is considered a staple of Phoenician style, cannot be taken in isolation because of its stylistic relationship to other artefacts.

Phoenician style was therefore created based on non-contextual artefacts associated with a stereotypical portrayal of the Phoenician people from secondary sources. It was constructed on the basis of hybridity and otherness, from an external (and orientalist) perspective, applying foreign artistic codes to a wide array of material that deserves to be studied as its own entity rather than as an eclectic mixture formed by elements borrowed from 'artistically superior' civilisations. In many ways, Phoenician style presents a case where objects have been given an identity independent of people, without necessarily questioning how representative this material was of the people it is meant to represent (or whether it was meant to represent people in the first place). Phoenician identity as it was conceived in academia for a long time was, therefore, a product of style rather than the inverse.

Museums and decontextualization

Although the question of Phoenician identity is currently being reconsidered, material resulting from these early identifications is still displayed as such in a number of museums, sometimes along with stereotypical ideas (Martin 2017, 22). However, identifying these artefacts is not always straightforward, as the fact that they are labelled based on style is rarely evident in the displays. Some large museums, like the British Museum and the Louvre, sometimes state the way in which an artefact ended up in their collection on its individual label or in their online databases. In other cases, such as with site museums, the very large majority of the material is known to be from excavations in and around the site. In the rare instances where it is not, the smaller museums tend to pinpoint this. For example, the Museo Barreca of Sant'Antioco isolates the material from the Lai collection, a non-contextual acquisition, in a single gallery and makes it clear in the signage that these artefacts do not originate from known excavations. In general, most museums in the dataset present a mixture of artefacts originating from excavations, purchases, and donations. It would be beyond the scope of this thesis to break this down in more detail, but I will be mentioning interesting provenances when talking about particular artefacts.

However, an interesting aspect to look at would be the date of establishment of the museums. Considering the parallel evolution of archaeology and museology, we can assume that the younger the museum, the more likely it is that its collection comes predominantly from secure contexts. The following timeline therefore details the foundation date of the museums in the dataset (Figure 80).

However, we have already seen from the architecture cue that many museums did not come to be overnight and were subject to changes in their location or mergers in their collections. This is notably the case of the National Museum of Archaeology in Malta, which changed locations in 1922, 1953, and 1954 to finally be inaugurated in its current location in 1958 (Gambin 2003). Moreover, collecting in Malta had already begun a century prior to the formalisation of a museum, which means its collection

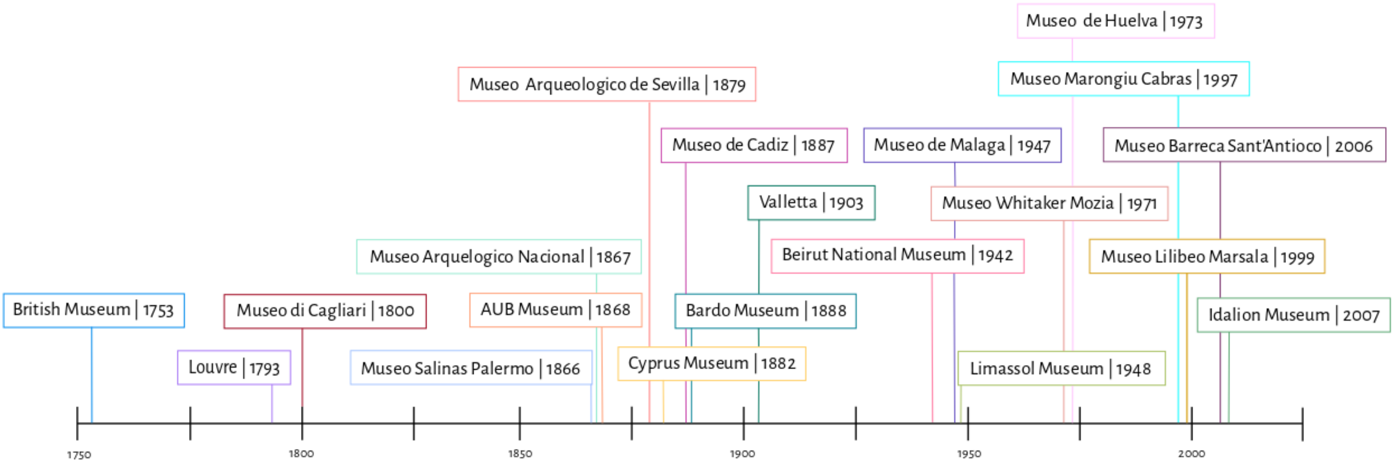


Figure 81: Timeline of the foundation dates of all the museums. Author's own.

started to amass and so lose contextuality long before being curated (Vella and Gilkes 2001). This is an important point because the existence of a collection is usually the trigger for the creation of a museum rather than the inverse. Therefore, even the collections of the newest museums did not move automatically from the site to the museum. Other examples of this type of occurrence can be seen in some museums of the Andalusian coast. The museums of Málaga, Cádiz and Huelva all have an archaeological as well as an artistic collection. In all these cases, these two were initially separate entities and were subsequently brought together in a single museum. In the case of Huelva, it is the artistic collection which took prevalence whereas in Cádiz, it is the archaeological collection and notably the anthropoid sarcophagi which makes the highlights of the museum (De La Sierra 2017). This discrepancy in terms of focus means that one collection was likely privileged during the merging process, with the museum focusing primarily on this one, as is clearly illustrated by the example of Cádiz where the discovery of each anthropoid sarcophagus led to important changes in the design of the museum (De La Sierra 2017). In this case, this is to the advantage of the Phoenician collection, but in other cases, this material is relegated to the side-lines and it becomes more difficult to trace its perceptions in the past.

The dataset presents a relatively even distribution with 10 museums founded in the 19th century, 8 in the 20th century, and 2 in the 21st century. In fact, the two youngest museums also happen to be site museums, a trend which does not take off in Phoenician sites prior to the establishment of the Whitaker Museum in 1971 (although Whitaker himself bought the island of Mozia in 1908 and had been excavating there even earlier (Toti 2008)). On the other side of the timeline, it is the two international museums which are the oldest, followed by most national museums. The last national museum to be founded was the Beirut National Museum in 1942, making the range for this category early 19th century

to mid-20th century. Globally, this means that the largest museums tend to be the oldest and the ones with the broadest collections. This furthers the difficulty in terms of detecting and defining Phoenician material, because it is more likely that it has a less secure origin in these museums.

The study of early perceptions and interpretation of Phoenician material in museums therefore presents challenges at several levels which all come down to the issue of decontextualization. I have already explored most of these issues in Chapter 1, so rather than focusing on the theoretical implications of loss of context through museums, I will now look at examples illustrating the decontextualization of Phoenician collections in museums. The principle of decontextualization itself seems to favour small artefacts, as they are easier to move and therefore more likely to end up in a scatter of different museums. We have already seen how this was the case with the metal bowls, but also with the jewellery from Tharros, an assemblage now dismantled by its presence in at least three different museums.

However, and perhaps more surprisingly, much larger artefacts have also been subject to this phenomenon. The Phoenician collection at the Louvre, for instance, contains a staggering number of heavy stone artefacts ranging from sarcophagi and stelae to monumental architectural elements. The most famous one of these is, of course, the Amathus vase which was shipped to the museum in 1866 and has since then been a highlight of the collection (Fontan 2007, 56). However, the Louvre also possesses many other monumental artefacts, including proto-Aeolic column capitals (also from Cyprus), as well as two lintels from the region of Byblos. One of these presents a particularly interesting case of decontextualization (Figure 81). It was brought back to the museum c. 1861 as one of the findings from Renan's mission. The lintel was found reused as part of a church, as attested by the cross and inscription in Greek added onto it in the 5th or 6th century CE (Gubel 2002, 73). However, this artefact is called 'Phoenician' by the museum and is dated to 400-200 BCE without giving further reasoning as to this dating and designation. If we assume this is correct, then it means that at the point of its discovery in the 1860s, this lintel had already been decontextualized at least twice. This is not a rare occurrence; stelae for example are also often reused as architectural pieces, as was the case with those from the tophet of Tharros, for example (Del Vais 2019, pers. comm.). These instances often present challenges for museums, especially when they are aiming to integrate such artefacts into their



Figure 82: Lintel with a winged sun disk at the Louvre. Photo author's own.

Phoenician narrative. Retracing their original context becomes almost impossible, and it is through stylistic characteristics that they are therefore deemed to be Phoenician.

On the other hand, we can consider the collection and display of these monumental artefacts to be a continuation of their stories. There is something of note in the fact that such large pieces were so prized by museums. The Louvre is not the only case in this study. We often see statues and architectural pieces take important placements in museums. This is the case in Mozia, where the highlight is clearly the marble statue known as the 'Youth of Mozia', found in a destruction layer and therefore one of the few artefacts without a secure context at this site (Papadopoulos 2014, 395) (Figure 82). In a parallel display, the Museo Lilibeo of Marsala features a marble Venus as the epicentre of the Punic and Roman gallery. The Museo Salinas of Palermo dedicates a gallery to each of an Astarte throne, an anthropoid sarcophagus, and the statue known as the 'Torso of the Stagione'. At the Beirut National Museum, the monumental artefacts are the first items visitors see since they are on the ground floor, and so on… This focus on architectural elements and statues is quite telling in terms of how Phoenician collections were interpreted. Significantly, they are much more prominent at national and international museums because site museums can afford to keep architectural elements *in situ* since they can be viewed as part of the visiting experience. Moreover, considering that many of the aforementioned museums were established early on and that some of their collections began to be formed prior to structured excavations, it is not surprising that they own many large pieces. These types of artefacts are in fact much more visible in the archaeological record, and they were therefore more likely to be encountered than small seals or amulets, which could explain their presence in the oldest museums. Finally, their scale makes them spectacular, which fits in with old ideas of what should be in a museum. Shipping the Amathus vase to the Louvre was a colossal achievement which reflected highly not only on the museum but on all of France (Vivielle 1927; Fontan 2007, 55). This has implications that touch upon colonialism and the appropriation of culture which I will come back to in the final chapter.

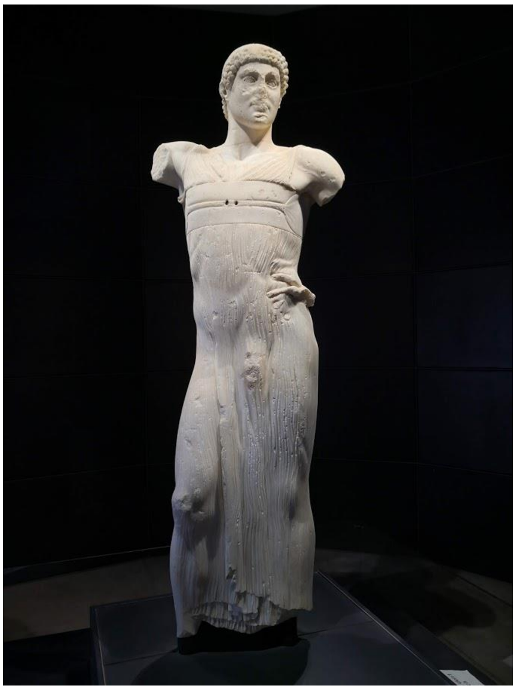


Figure 83: The 'Youth of Mozia' at the Museo Whitaker. Photo author's own.

To return to the idea of style, statues present an interesting case study. First of all, the fact that many of them are given names shows that not only does this amplify their importance within the museum, but that they are also treated as works of art. In fact, this type of artefact is the one where the line between art and archaeology is probably the thinnest in terms of early interpretations. It shows that statues were first considered and collected as artworks, and this is further proven by their treatment

in publications. The fact that they are still exhibited in isolation and as highlights further proves this association. In terms of their designation as Phoenician, it is not necessarily an object category which is considered a standard of Phoenician craftsmanship the way glass or metal bowls can be. This also marks the separation between art and archaeology: they are not seen as examples of Phoenician artefacts but as objects of ancient art. Since early authors were reluctant to associate art with the Phoenicians, the lack of typicisation of the statue is understandable. When they are called Phoenician by their current labels, it is usually based on two factors. The first is the provenance of the stone, which can determine the locality of the statue. The second is stylistic criteria, bringing us back to the idea of hybridity. The aspect which is most commonly noted on Phoenician statues is their Egyptianizing features. However, most of the comments on the style of the statues are rather ambiguous and once again, very artistically oriented, as demonstrated by the lengthy labels of the 'Youth of Mozia' and the 'Torso of the Stagione'. Statues are therefore an interesting example of often decontextualized objects, often highlighted by museums but struggling to fit within a clear definition of the term 'Phoenician', falling in a middle ground of perceptions.

Museums are therefore hives of decontextualization. With collections formed heterogeneously over time and brought back together in new assemblages, information is invariably lost. The degree to which this happens varies greatly between the museums, but even the youngest ones are subject to it. As a result, artefacts are often identified by comparison and assimilation. Phoenician material in particular has been the subject of much change in meanings because of its movemented history of recovery. This becomes especially clear when we look at material from Cyprus, which is still an ambiguous case in many museums. At the British Museum, the Cypriot and Phoenician material were originally grouped together and displayed in the North Gallery, in between two main sections of the museum until the annexation of Cyprus by the department of Greece and Rome in 1917 (British Museum 1908; 1970). This, combined with the unusual place of Cypriot material in the Department of Oriental Antiquities at the Louvre as well as the near absence of mention of the Phoenicians in Cypriot museums proves the complexity of these collections and the difficulty museums have had to place them within their own narratives. This is echoed in academia with the controversial use of the term Cypro-Phoenician, notably in reference to pottery (Schreiber 2003; Bourgonianis 2012). In order to define Phoenician collections - probably more than many others - museums and academics have had to rely heavily on stylistic criteria because of the issues of decontextualization posed both by their recovery and their displays.

Iconography

The 19th-century concept of hybridity that planted the seed for the fabrication of Phoenician style relied essentially on an iconographic perspective. In fact, one of the most frequently used criteria to define artefacts as Phoenician was the occurrence of certain symbols on various objects. Some of these

symbols are still considered Phoenician or Punic trademarks to this day. This is notably the case of the Tanit sign, the bottle idol, or the crescent disk (Ferjaoui 2007, 144). Other instances are now approached more carefully (like the winged sun disk and the winged sphinxes) but their early association with the Phoenicians resulted in their current places in some museums. For instance, the lintels discussed earlier both feature winged sun disks and are displayed together despite one of them being dated to the Roman period (150-200 CE) and the other to the Late Iron Age (400-200 BCE). The variation of half a millennium did not stop the Louvre from placing them together in the crypt which hosts most of the Phoenician material form the Levantine coast, especially since they were both acquired by the museum following Renan's mission. A similar example can be found with the type of objects known as Astarte thrones, which are usually flanked with winged sphinxes. These objects tend to be considered Phoenician by museums, although they appear relatively late (around the 6th century BCE) and are almost exclusive to the Levantine coast apart from an isolated example from Solunto, now at the Museo Salinas in Palermo. This is therefore another case of artefacts not befitting the conventional dates for the Phoenician period nor adhering to the typical distribution, yet still labelled as such because of iconographic occurrences.

In fact, the winged sphinxes are good examples of the use of the concept of hybridity in the fabrication of Phoenician style. These motifs were already attested in Egyptian and Assyrian art, but their rendering on Phoenician artefacts differs from both. While the body of the sphinx takes on Egyptianizing features, the wings are depicted in a more Near Eastern fashion (Brown 1992, 9). This led to the identification of this type of winged sphinxes as Phoenician because their situation would have put them in an ideal position to merge characteristics from Egypt as well as Assyria. In addition, their joint occurrence alongside other of the aforementioned symbols enhanced their status as Phoenician icons.

On the other hand, the Tanit sign is not usually found on the refined artefacts such as ivories, metal bowls or statues that interested early scholars. This symbol typically occurs more frequently on stelae or amulets, and exceptionally on jewellery. As a result, it was not a sign associated with the Phoenicians from early on. However, it later became tightly intertwined with Phoenician presence in the west and Punic identity, notably because of its prevalence in Carthage and the central Mediterranean (Moscati 1968, 136). This example shows the persistence of relying on iconography to define identity, even though it is exploited differently through time.

I created a map showing the distribution of four symbols typically associated with the Phoenicians as they occur on artefacts displayed in the museums of the dataset (see Appendix 2, Map 21). I chose to feature these four symbols because they have been rather prominent in academia and present a mixture of dated and persistent associations with the Phoenicians. The limitations of the map are linked to the type and number of artefacts on display as well as the museums which were accessible. It should therefore not be taken as an exhaustive reference. However, it shows that there is no clear

pattern in the distribution of any of the four symbols. They are all found in varying quantities across the Mediterranean, including beyond the realm of Phoenician and Punic expansion, in places like Assyria and Etruria. While it is true that their presence there can be justified by traded or commissioned objects, the commercial aspect would take away from the primary symbolic power of the iconographical signs, and even add another layer of meaning to the artefacts carrying them, according to who was looking at them (Feldman 2014, 178). Moreover, considering that some (even in some cases all) of these symbols are absent from certain areas with established Phoenician presence such as Malta, the Levantine coast, or Sardinia is another argument against treating them as staples of Phoenician style and identity. While these can be of significance for local communities, they cannot account as a unified marker and enable us to identify an artefact as Phoenician because it contains one of these signs. In summary, what can be taken away from looking at the distribution map of symbols is the lack of pattern in this regard. Nothing emerges in terms of quantities or distribution between sites, which shows that local trends are probably the better way to go in terms of looking at these symbols.

Another issue arising from the use of iconography to determine style is the different layers of meanings these symbols can take. Going back to the Tanit sign, for instance, this has been the subject of many interpretations and speculations, none of which has really emerged as dominant (D'Andrea 2017). Its frequent occurrence on tophet stelae and as amulets suggests that it is not entirely devoid of meaning, but whether this meaning is a marker of Phoenician or Punic identity is very debatable. Trying to fit it in this discussion actually takes away from its contextual significance since it disregards the symbolism of it at a lower level it might have been intended in.



Figure 84: Classification of the tophet stelae in Cabras. Photo author's own.

A similar argument can be made from other signs, notably the crescent disk and the winged sun disk, which are both motifs adapted from Egypt (Owusu 2008, 37; Quinn 2011, 393). Their popularity therefore transcends the limits of the Phoenician world. These signs are also quite widespread on stelae, with an interesting distribution. While the winged sun disk seems to be more prevalent in the east, the crescent disk has more frequent appearances in the western Mediterranean (although both are present everywhere to some extent). Stelae are notable artefacts when it comes to style because they are a category of object which lends itself well to typologies. In fact, the Museo Marongiu of Cabras

even presents a classification of stelae from the tophet of Tharros in the labelling of its reconstruction (Figure 83). And while there are definitely some similarities in terms of their architecture and decoration which leads to their groupings, there is also great variability in stelae. The first difference is that they can be dedicatory or funerary in nature, something usually determined through the inscriptions they hold. Therefore, rather than the iconographical elements of stelae, it is their epigraphic and symbolic natures that tend to be standardised. In this case, the iconographic factor is secondary in meaning to inscriptions which convey the intention of the object rather directly. Furthermore, it could be argued that the presence of symbols such as the crescent disk and the winged sun disk on stelae holding inscriptions have contributed to the association of these signs with the Phoenicians. As a result, it would mean that this stylistic identity was constructed rather than inferred, especially since it was largely dependent on inscriptions.

Another argument against the use of iconography to determine Phoenician style is the great variability present in some cases. For example, the winged sphinx, which has the widest distribution across the Mediterranean, can present significant differences between the Levant and Iberia. Especially in the case of ivories, the instances found on the Iberian Peninsula exhibit a unique character which has led researchers to argue for a more local phenomenon (Feldman 2019, 379). The popularity of this motif in the ancient Mediterranean and Near East further complicates the picture, as illustrated by an example from the Museo Arqueológico Nacional. In the showcase entitled 'Mediterranean Travellers' - part of the Phoenician section- a bone plaque featuring a winged sphinx from the necropolis of Puig des Molins (in Ibiza) is on display (Figure 84). It is dated very precisely to the first quarter of the 5th century BCE, and it is called 'Etruscan', with the assumption that it was brought to Ibiza by Phoenician traders. This artefact shows that even objects with a secure context are not exempt from iconographic-based speculation, but it also shows how ideas around these symbols have evolved, noting that they are not systematically considered Phoenician staples anymore.



Figure 85: Ivory plaque at the Museo Arqueológico Nacional. Photo author's own.

The association between the Phoenicians and certain iconographic symbols is therefore both flimsy and outdated, as shown by their uneven distribution and the eclectic mixture of supports they appear on. Moreover, they are not always featured uniformly even on a single type of artefact. For instance, bronze razors, a relatively uncontroversial type of artefact which occurs predominantly in the central and western Mediterranean sometimes feature some of these signs. However, they can also be plain

and undecorated or display entirely different scenes. At the same time, these objects have usually been classified as Punic without too much debate, not because of their iconography but because of their restricted and contextualized distribution. This example illustrates the fact that a stylistic definition based on iconography is probably too broad to be efficient. While it is true that symbols such as the crescent disk or the Tanit sign must have interpretative worth, they can no longer be taken at face value and considered particular tracers of Phoenician identity simply because they display mixed characteristics or because they are featured alongside inscriptions. A more useful approach would be a revaluation of each symbol for a better understanding of their individual significance in particular contexts. This is beyond the scope of this thesis, but it would be an interesting alternative to the attempt to fabricate an identity based on singled out iconographical cues.

Orientalizing and Orientalism

The ivory plaque from Ibiza brings us to another problematic which arises with the stylistic definition of Phoenician material: that of boundaries. The first millennium BCE Mediterranean was a highly interconnected space, and artefacts and ideas travelled at an unprecedented level and pace (Van Dommelen and Knapp 2010). It can therefore become challenging to delineate clear phenomena based on the visual aspect of finds. The academic repercussion of this is translated through the concept of Orientalizing. This is a term which has been used very early on in archaeology to define the eastern characteristic of certain artefacts, notably in Greek art (Burkert 1995; Markoe 1996, 47; Purcell 2006, 27). And while in Greek archaeology it is still used as a determinant for a defined period (the 7th century BCE), it is also used in other areas such as Iberia and Etruria, with different chronological and semantic implications. Anyone working with the first millennium BCE Mediterranean is no stranger to the complications of the Orientalizing paradigm and the controversy surrounding it. This concept leads to many intricacies, including shifts in meaning depending on the region and perspective, clear Orientalist and Eurocentric legacies, and diffusionism (Purcell 2006; Said 2008; Gunter 2014). Some of these intricacies and more have been tackled by many prominent scholars, notably Riva and Vella (2006), whose volume led to the conclusion that Orientalizing is a term both ambiguous and multifaceted, with extremely variable uses. With this in mind, in this section, I will focus on the issues connecting the Orientalizing concept to the Phoenicians, notably its museum applications.

I encountered the term 'Orientalizing' in almost every single museum of the dataset. However, its applications vary greatly from one museum to another. At the broadest level, a couple of museums use it to define a time period. This is notably the case of the Museo de Huelva, which uses it on its main timeline to refer to the stretch between the 10th and the 5th centuries BCE, whereas other Spanish museums such as the Museo de Málaga or the Museo de Cádiz clearly refer to this period as Phoenician. The practice of employing the term 'Orientalizing' as a period stems first and foremost from the archaeological use of this term as such. In the case of Huelva, it is also a way to foster

inclusivity in its narrative: if the museum were to refer to a Phoenician period, this would automatically exclude the local populations and their interactions with the Phoenicians (Aguilera 2019, pers. comm.). In this case, using the term 'Orientalizing' is therefore a way to focus not on an ethnic identity but on a cultural phenomenon which involved more than the dichotomy between Phoenicians and locals. The Phoenician occupation cannot be compared to the Roman one for example, which was much more uniform and standardized, as reflected by the material culture (Laurence and Berry 2001, 2). However, a major shortfall of this approach is the ambiguity of the term 'Orientalizing', which takes on different meanings in different contexts. Therefore, material called 'Orientalizing' in Huelva can be extremely comparable to artefacts called 'Phoenician' in other museums, which can lead to confusion as to what is the identity of these objects. Therefore, although Orientalizing seems to be a fluid and inclusive term, which is true to an extent, it is also too malleable to be viable in conjunction with Phoenician material.

This issue also has repercussions at a lower level. In fact, some objects have been called 'Orientalizing' as a result of their non-contextual findspots combined with the fact that they have no clearly identifiable stylistic features which would allow them to be labelled into more specific categories. This is notably the case of engraved tridacna shells, an example of which I began this thesis with. The controversy surrounding this particular artefact was that despite being used as a highlight object in one of the most important and most recent exhibitions about the Phoenicians, it has no clear identification and is not displayed by its parent institution- the British Museum. Moreover, out of the thousands of artefacts which formed the Phoenician collections included in this study, I only encountered a single fragment of an engraved tridacna shell. This was an unprovenanced object in a showcase featuring mixed materials at the Louvre (Figure 85). The Louvre calls it 'of Phoenician style' and places it within its Phoenician galleries, noting that it also has other examples which came from excavations displayed in the Susa gallery. The British Museum also has various tridacna shells in different departments (with the one from Vulci belonging to the Department of Greece and Rome and an example from Sippar to the Department of the Middle East) since the allocation was made according to their findspot (Tubb 2018, pers. comm.). Museums therefore seem relatively clear about the identification of tridacna shells in the sense that they are seldom



Figure 86: An engraved tridacna shell fragment at the Louvre. Photo author's own.

associated with the Phoenicians. This actually matches the archaeological knowledge about these artefacts, which are more likely to be a Southern Levantine production since most of the unworked specimens are found in the region of the Red Sea, but are distributed around the eastern Mediterranean (Stucky 2007, 218). The question then becomes why did the volume where this distribution study was published choose an artefact only flimsily associated with the Phoenicians as its feature image? It could be that the aesthetic value of the engraved tridacna took precedence over its significance in a Phoenician context, but it also testifies to the complexity of assessing the degree of authenticity, foreign influences, and local imitations on such artefacts. More generally, it shows the limitations of a strictly bounded stylistic definition.

Another object category which illustrates this point very well is jewellery. Phoenician jewellery in particular presents an interesting and intriguing case. It has not been the subject of many studies, unlike stelae or purple dye for instance. This might be due to the fact that Phoenician jewellery is extremely composite, with materials ranging from precious metals to amber, stone, and glass (Gubel 2019, 358). At the same time, it is a category highly regarded and well represented in museums since jewellery is considered to be amongst the most valuable types of artefacts. The Museo Archeologico Nazionale of Cagliari even dedicates an entire showcase to Phoenician jewellery, clearly signifying its importance within its own collection and therefore Sardinian archaeology in general. In terms of provenance, the Phoenician jewellery I encountered in museums usually either comes from very secure funerary contexts or from unprovenanced acquisitions. However, jewellery is one of the few cases where even *in situ* finds can be difficult to place in a precise time frame (Pisano 1974; Quillard 1979; 1987; 2013). This is due to the fact that it is a valuable commodity. It can therefore be transmitted from generation to generation as an heirloom, unlike more disposable materials such as pottery which tends to change more frequently (Lilios 1999, 241). The durability of jewellery presents challenges in terms of setting temporal boundaries. This continuity is reflected in the fact that early Phoenician jewellery on the central Levantine coast is extremely similar to Late Bronze Age, and in some cases Middle Bronze Age jewellery (Markoe 2000, 152). This makes it complicated to determine exactly which elements are Phoenician. Although museums display jewellery as Phoenician, they rarely rely upon stylistic terms to define it as such. This does happen in some instances, where they pick up on certain motifs such as winged sphinxes, palmettes, or lotus flowers to ascribe an oriental origin to the jewellery. In fact, many of the museums such as the British Museum, the Museo Arqueologico Nacional, or the Cyprus Museum mention these features as originally Egyptian influences and refer to the jewellery as Oriental or Orientalizing rather than Phoenician. The association with the Phoenicians takes on a more technological aspect which I will be coming back to in the next section.

However, one of the main stakes of using 'Orientalizing' in cases where the composite nature of artefacts is too strong to claim for a purely Phoenician origin is the Orientalist connotation it can take on. The stylistic designation of artefacts as Oriental based on elements adapted from Egypt erases the

connection to Egypt, especially if it is not mentioned in the labelling. In fact, the term 'Orientalizing', because it can signify a variety of different origins, is Orientalist because it does not go beyond ascribing a vaguely eastern root to artefacts. Moreover, the idea of the East itself is a relative concept, which when used to signify Orientalization is usually adopted from a European perspective (Purcell 2006, 22).

To understand how the term 'Orientalizing' is in fact Orientalist, we can look at the example of thymiateria, a category of (usually) metal incense burners often deemed Orientalizing by museums. Many of these consist of a stand with lotus petals with either an attached bowl or space to insert one at the top (Franz 1999, where she refers to them as drooping petals, but I have not encountered this term in museums). In museums from the Western Mediterranean, notably in Spain, where they are relatively common, these artefacts are almost invariably labelled 'Oriental' or 'Orientalizing' and associated with Cyprus. They are also quite widely distributed in Cyprus. However, Cypriot museums associate them with an Egyptian or Levantine origin. At the British Museum, an example from Idalion displayed in one of the showcases of the Cyprus gallery is ascribed Phoenician origins. In a sense, none of these museums is wrong. This type of thymiaterion is attested since the 16th century BCE in Egypt and continues to be in use until the Roman period (Franz 1999, 82). Its use in the Mediterranean peaks around the 7-6th centuries BCE, hence its association with the Phoenicians who are believed to have popularised it, and the earliest instances outside Egypt are from Cyprus around the 11th century BCE (Mederos and Harrisson 1996), followed by an apparition on the Levantine coast in the 10th century BCE (Franz 1999, 95). The nature of the association of these artefacts with the Phoenicians remains unclear since many thymateria have been found outside purely Phoenician contexts, from Etruria to Nuragic Sardinia to Iberia, where thymiateria take on a unique character (Franz 1999, 108; Mederos and Harrisson 1996). It is therefore misleading to consider them a marker of Phoenician identity since they are obviously used by people all over the Mediterranean. When museums label them as Oriental, however, they discredit this idea of contextual use and instead assign them to a foreign trend without further specification. Whether these objects originate in Cyprus, Egypt, or the Levant is not necessarily important, but what they meant in the place they ended up in is also lost information when they are just called 'Oriental' or 'Orientalizing'.

Bronze figurines are also often associated with the Orientalizing definition in museums, be it Reshef figurines or representations of other deities such as Astarte (Figure 86). However, what is interesting is that there are practically no examples of such artefacts from eastern or even central Mediterranean contexts, and most of the ones I encountered in this study come from the Andalusian region. Metal figurines representing gods or worshippers are known from the Near East, Egypt, and the Aegean since the Bronze Age; a notable example is the hoard from Byblos dated to the Middle Bronze Age (c. 2000-1550 BCE) which is often misleadingly associated with the Phoenicians (Moorey and Fleming 1984, 72) (Figure 87). They later become quite popular around the Mediterranean, including in Greece



Figure 87: A bronze Melqart at the Museo de Cádiz and a bronze Astarte at the Museo Arqueológico de Sevilla. Photos author's own.

and Etruria, two hubs of the Orientalizing insistence (Mederos and Harrisson 1996). The combined factor of a long Near Eastern history and distribution in so-called spheres of influence can explain the treatment of these figurines in Spain. However, their designation as Phoenician or Oriental is also largely due to the fact that the deities represented by these figurines constitute new introductions to the region.



Figure 88: Part of the Byblos hoard at the Beirut National Museum. Photo author's own.

However, the matter is not as simple as it seems since museums also rely on stylistic criteria to justify their use of the term. The Louvre, for instance, displays a statuette of a nude warrior in its 'Phoenician influences in the Mediterranean' alcove (Figure 88). This figurine, which was found in Cádiz, previously belonged to the department of Greece and Rome because of its stylistic features, which show Greek influence in the rendering of the figure. The curator responsible for Phoenician collections recently rediscovered it and chose to place it in the centre of the display about connectivity in the Mediterranean because she sees it as a good testimony for it: it has Greek features,

was likely made in Cádiz, and comes from a Phoenician prototype of the smiting god (Le Meaux 2018, pers. comm.). This is an example of a modern application of the idea of hybridity. However, this time, it is not used to ascribe a Phoenician identity to an object but to highlight the complexity of the Mediterranean network.



Figure 89: A bronze statuette from Cádiz, 6th century BCE, at the Louvre. Photo author's own.

One final example which illustrates the challenges of the Orientalizing idea is the terracotta masks and protomes, widely distributed in the Mediterranean. These artefacts, which are all relatively similar, are displayed in many of the museums in the dataset, each time with very different appellations. The dichotomy between Greek and Egyptian is very prominent, and very clearly based on stylistic criteria such as the shape of the eyes or the hairstyle. This is also a prominent trend in literature where these objects are often considered to constitute an example of a mixture of borrowed traditions (both in terms of style and use) forming a local, in this case Phoenician or Punic phenomenon (Brown 1992, 20; Ciasca 1995, 447; Orsingher 2019). In this example, the Orientalist perspective is reflected not in the use of the term 'Orientalizing', which is seldom associated with masks and protomes in museums, but with the constant referral to Greek features in the labelling and interpretation.

In summary, stylistic definitions of diverse categories of materials associated with the Phoenicians have fallen into Orientalist loopholes. The use of the term 'Orientalizing' and the ambiguity it entails certainly play a role in this but getting rid of it altogether would not solve a legacy of Orientalism in the interpretation of Phoenician collections. Moreover, the term 'Orientalizing' can be the most inclusive alternative in some cases, as we saw with the Huelva example although it is still used *faute de mieux*. In this respect, it shares this with the idea of Phoenician identity and how it was first established by default. There is also an overlap in the use of both terms, which can be confusing, especially when looking at these collections together. Clearly, they cannot be substituted for each other since using only 'Orientalizing' would erase Phoenician collections in the east completely (in addition to all the other implications we mentioned), and using only 'Phoenician' would erase the local nuances in the central and eastern Mediterranean (which the use of 'Orientalizing' also does to some extent). Therefore, there is no clear way out of this issue, especially considering that the Orientalism in the Orientalizing holds stakes which go beyond stylistic definitions and perceptions, as we saw in Chapter 2. As long as museums commit to a clear narrative and keep working in their current system, which holds this legacy, it will be a (perhaps) unnecessary task to try to unify these discrepancies. However,

acknowledging the history of Orientalism while discussing Phoenician collections should already be a step forward.

Technology

From the above discussion, the pattern which seems to emerge is one of disparity and heterogeneity in the first millennium BCE Mediterranean. Since a lot of artefacts show a high level of local variations and irregular distributions both in time and space, it would almost seem as if Phoenician identity based on stylistic criteria is entirely fabricated. This has in fact been argued recently, notably by Quinn (2018). However, a major flaw of this approach is that it does not really consider material evidence, which displays cases of strong continuity and uniformity. Moreover, even if we take into account that Phoenician and Punic likely had many local dialects, language and script also show an element of continuity (Quinn and Vella 2014, 7; Forston 2018).

In terms of material evidence, pottery presents a substantial pattern supporting the argument for a common thread along the Phoenician route. Without getting into gritty typological details, there is a strong display of continuity in both bichrome and red slip wares along sites associated with the Phoenicians in the eastern, central, and western Mediterranean. In addition, key shapes which have been recognised as Phoenician in that they only start to appear on the Levantine coast during the Iron Age, such as the trefoil mouth and mushroom lip jugs, are also attested at numerous sites and museums corresponding to the Phoenician colonies (Anderson 1990, 41; Nunez 2014). In fact, it is often the pottery, along with other factors of consistency such as architecture and language which helped date and determine some sites as Phoenician (Pritchard 1971, 16; Ruiz Mata 2002, 268; Lipinski 2004, XIV). Unlike other types of artefacts with a Mediterranean-wide distribution such as scarabs or metal bowls, assemblages with vessels of bichrome and red slip pottery are limited to certain areas and are seldom featured outside the Phoenician world. There is very little evidence of this type of pottery coming from Assyria, the Aegean, or Etruria for example (Sherratt 2019, pers. comm.). Therefore, and despite some regional variations, this points to common ground between the various Phoenician sites. Whether the pottery is an indicator of eastern people established in these sites, or a sign of importation, or made locally in imitation, or a combination of these is debatable and interpretations vary from site to site. However, it shows that there is definitely a phenomenon of cultural transmission happening in these sites, which would lead to the conclusion that a certain level of unity cannot be fully excluded.

In some areas, the local variations which accompany the consistency of red slip and bichrome wares are more telling than they seem. Cyprus, for example, has a long history of bichrome pottery which predates the Phoenician period whereas red slip vessels are only attested starting then (Bikai 1978; Karageorghis 2005, 34). The tradition of bichrome pottery is an indicator of a long history of exchanges between Cyprus and the Levantine coast, while the introduction of red slip shows an influence strong

enough to have affected local production, if not the presence of Phoenician settlers. The complexity of exchanges in the Mediterranean network is also illustrated by the case of Andalusia, where pottery was produced in local clay following Phoenician tradition (Whitaker 1974, 60). Carthage also presents some variability in terms of shape but continuity in the use of red slip (Peserico 2002). All these examples testify to the consistency of stylistic expression and the impact of Phoenician pottery, which was integrated into the local lifestyle.

This consistency is reflected in the treatment of pottery within museums, which is surprisingly uniform compared to other aspects of Phoenician material culture. Apart from the two international museums (which either group artefacts by geographical provenance in the case of the Louvre, or have all the Phoenician material in a single showcase in the British Museum), all the museums of the dataset tend to regroup the pottery in specific showcases. Even in other instances of geographical delineation, such as at the Museo Barreca of Sant'Antioco, the pottery tends to be singled out. There, the pottery from the necropolis is therefore regrouped in showcases by tomb assemblage. In general, the pottery also tends to be consistently labelled as Phoenician, including in museums with a low frequency use of the term.

The uniformity of pottery across Phoenician sites is well known and far from ground-breaking. The consistency of pottery displays in museums further supports the argument that it is a robust common thread connecting sites, but also museums across the Mediterranean. The more problematic aspect of these displays is the fact that pottery is often segregated from other artefacts and relegated to 'less interesting' showcases while more spectacular objects might take more prominent places. However, it is also often these objects which have served to falsely construct a Phoenician stylistic identity whereas it is the pottery which offers the most valid evidence for it (Martin 2017, 85). This is quite ironic given that in other culture-historical paradigms, it is often the pottery which has controversially been ascribed to typologies of ethnicity and identity (Ucko 2003, xiv). While I do not support a definition of Phoenician identity solely based on pottery, I would argue for a more cohesive study of materials in conjunction.

Pottery also shows that overly detailed art historical or iconographic criteria might not be the best way to track identity based on stylistic factors. In fact, the way in which it is associated with the Phoenicians in museums is not clearly related to style but rather to technology. Although both red slip and bichrome are expressions of decoration, which would lead to a stylistic assumption, Phoenician pottery tends to be treated as a technical rather than an artistic achievement. This could be another expression of the elitism associated with style: where more luxurious object categories are associated with stylistic and artistic achievements, pottery production is characterized through technological innovation. This is especially apparent in museums of the central and western Mediterranean because Phoenician colonisation brought about the use of the potter's wheel in many of these areas, notably southern Spain, Malta, and Sicily (Vella et al. 2001, 268).

The example of pottery therefore shows that there might be something to explore in terms of a more technical approach to style. Not only do most museums treat both red slip and bichrome pottery as technological as well as stylistic Phoenician innovations, but they also display them relatively uniformly, and most importantly, make clear references to the fact that the vessels they display are similar to vessels from other sites. This shows that there can be a building block to construct displays from a more grounded and integrated perspective.

In fact, another object category which is very often interpreted through a technological rather than a stylistic lens is glass. Despite the fact that the association between glass and the Phoenicians is extremely powerful, most museums do not display glass artefacts based on their stylistic qualities but present them as a typical example of Phoenician craftsmanship. In the previous chapter, we saw that some museums put quite a lot of emphasis on Phoenician craftsmanship. In these museums, glass is almost invariably linked to this. Notable examples include the National Museum of Archaeology of Malta, the AUB Museum, and the British Museum. Again, the treatment of glass artefacts in museums is relatively uniform and invariably emphasizes the technology rather than the artistic value.

In fact, this association stems from a very old heritage, as glass first begins to be paired with the Phoenicians in the classical sources, some of which even credit them with the development of this technology (Elayi 2018, 21). Therefore, despite the fact that this material has been present since the Bronze Age at least, the legacy of classics perpetuates its association with the Phoenicians (Moscati 1988, 97). This phenomenon occurs not only in museums but also in both ancient and more recent handbooks and exhibitions about the Phoenicians (see notably Kenrick 1855; Perrot and Chipiez 1885; Rawlinson 1889 for 19th century examples and Krings 1995; Fontan & Le Meaux 2007; Aruz et al. 2014 for more recent ones). The historical association between glass and the Phoenicians continues to impact the presentation of glass artefacts, even though museums are more precise about the information they provide concerning the development of the technology.

Just as pottery, glass is explored through a more technological than stylistic point of view. Unlike most pottery, however, glass can be considered to form part of the corpus of luxury goods, notably because of its rarity, but also because of the contents of glass alabastra, likely to be precious ointments and perfumes (Barthelemy 1995, 514). It is interesting to see that their interpretation does not echo that of other luxury materials such as ivory, for example, and that even glass artefacts with an iconographic value such as the beads in the shape of faces are not treated with particular emphasis on artistic or visual criteria. This can partly be explained by the fact that the distribution of glass artefacts is more coherent and that they usually come from secure contexts. Therefore, they do not need to be identified based on stylistic criteria. This, in addition to the strong connexion established by the ancient sources thus prevailed as guidelines for their identification and presentation.

The example of glass shows that even objects considered more precious do not necessarily have to be ascribed an identity based on stylistic criteria. This principle is actually reflected in the museum

presentations of other artefacts perceived as luxurious, notably jewellery. While some of the iconographical signs on jewellery were used early on to designate it as Phoenician or Orientalizing, this is not usually the aspect museums focus on the most. Rather, they tend to emphasize the technological innovation that came about with Phoenician jewellery (especially outside the Levantine coast), notably techniques such as filigree, repoussé and granulation (Ortega-Feliu et.al 2007, 129). This is visible in the National Museum of Archaeology of Malta, the Louvre, the British Museum, the Museo Arqueológico Nacional, the Museo Barreca, and the Museo di Cagliari, where an entire showcase is dedicated to Phoenician jewellery. This focus links back to the craftsmanship aspect of Phoenician culture which many of these museums also play on. Presenting innovative techniques helps back the idea that the Phoenicians were great artisans.

However, it should be noted that although technology makes an appearance, it is still not the primary focus on the interpretation of so-called luxury artefacts. Metal vessels, for example, be it the famous bowls or the larger braziers and platters which figure prominently in Spain are still perceived through the lens of style and iconography. Technology and style are not conflicting concepts, and the interpretation of jewellery, despite its shortcomings, demonstrates that they can be used in conjunction. Technology provides a complement to stylistic analysis because it can be tracked perhaps more precisely. It can be argued that stylistic elements can spread out more widely and more easily than techniques, through traded materials, inheritances, or simply the adoption of trends (Bauer 2008). Innovation in technology, on the other hand, requires a level of specialisation which is intrinsically linked to people directly involved in the production process or its transmission (Van Dommelen and Knapp 2010). As a result, technical developments in the material culture are more securely traceable than stylistic ones. Once again, however, it is the combination of context, style, and technology which makes an object what it is and craftsmanship techniques alone are not enough to provide an insightful perspective.

Scales of style: local trends, Mediterranean fashions

The methodology for the preparation of this chapter involved compiling a database of all object types called Phoenician by museums in order to explore emerging trends in terms of interpretational tendencies. I have already exploited some of these examples throughout this chapter, but what is left to discuss is the bigger picture. I ended up with 23 categories of objects which all were considered 'typically Phoenician' or at least associated with this culture in no less than four museums. Not the same objects are considered so in all the museums, as this depends on their individual collections as well as their histories and policies. Yet, it is still possible to extract some insights about what objects take prevalence in what regions.

We already saw that some artefacts, such as red slip and bichrome pottery, were popular throughout the Phoenician world. In other instances, the reach of some objects extends even beyond the

Phoenician cities to all the Mediterranean and parts of the Near East. We saw this phenomenon happen with some of the iconographical signs discussed earlier, but it is also attested on some other categories of artefacts. Scarabs, for instance, are quite widely attested all over the first millennium BCE Mediterranean (Bolschoos 2018, 123). This distribution combined with their established Egyptian origins makes them a Mediterranean-wide fashion rather than a product of Phoenician style. Most museums with scarabs on display acknowledge this perspective in their labelling, and the Phoenician dimension comes into play to say that scarabs were popular amongst and sometimes popularised by the Phoenicians. Their production could have taken place at various sites in the Mediterranean and Near East (Boyes 2013, 84).

A comparable phenomenon happens with amulets. These are also Egyptian in origin and know a popularity similar to that of scarabs across the Mediterranean (Fletcher 2004, 51). For these reasons, I expected a similar treatment in museums to that of scarabs, which are associated with the Phoenicians relatively often. However, amulets are only called 'Phoenician' at the British Museum, despite their presence in most museums of the dataset. The other museums either label them individually simply as amulets, or when there is a longer text about them it usually puts them in a framework where their popularity in the Phoenician and Punic world is stated but they are called 'Egyptian'. Amulets come in various shapes such as wedjat, the god Bes, the djed pillar, and various Egyptian deities. Because all these are unequivocally Egyptian elements, there is no real controversy in their definition (Acquaro 1988, 396; Schmitz 2019, 14). Even if the Phoenicians adopted them and they became an integral part of the culture, it is difficult to track any stylistic shapes on amulets, which tend to look very standard. Scarabs, on the other hand, can show more structural variety and sometimes feature nonsense hieroglyphs deemed to be decorative, which helps further break down their distribution and therefore designate them as Phoenician in some instances (Avigad 1968, 49; Culican 1974, 195; Mumford 2007).

The influence of Egypt is also attested on much larger artefacts. A notable example are anthropoid sarcophagi, which are attested in the Levant, Cyprus, Sicily, Malta, and Andalusia. These artefacts have been very strongly associated with the Phoenicians and are clearly presented as such in the museums which feature them (Fontan 2007). At the National Museum of Beirut and the Museo de Cádiz, the anthropoid sarcophagi are considered highlights of the collection. On the other hand, these artefacts are almost invariably labelled in a way which brings back the idea of style along with the notion of hybridity. They are considered to have derived from Egyptian prototypes, notably because of the shape of the coffin and the raised feet. At the same time, they are often associated with the idea of Greek style because of the facial features of some of these sarcophagi. Although these premises are correct, especially since many of the sarcophagi are made from Greek marble (Lembke 2001), the focus on the Greco-Egyptian duality in the labelling erases the unique character of these artefacts and places the Phoenicians in a narrative centred on borrowing and adaptation. The association of the word style with either Greek or Egyptian rather than Phoenician denotes the absence of a truly Phoenician style.

The picture presented by the anthropoid sarcophagi is therefore extremely complex. On the one hand, they are often considered a staple of Phoenician style, and they are truly unique to the Phoenician landscape, while on the other they are interpreted as a product of hybridity and borrowing. Moreover, their distribution both in time and space raises some questions. In fact, anthropoid sarcophagi are markedly absent from key areas such as Carthage, the Balearic Islands, and Sardinia. This would suggest that they are not a global Phoenicio-Punic phenomenon but a localized tendency which spread from the east but does not take off in Carthaginian culture, and ultimately does not reach into Carthage's sphere of influence. Furthermore, they are quite limited in time, as they peak between the 6th and 4th centuries BCE. It would thus seem more appropriate to consider anthropoid sarcophagi as a temporary fashion rather than a lasting icon of Phoenician style.

In addition, it is important to keep in mind the fact that anthropoid sarcophagi are extremely expensive to manufacture, which is clear from the existence of terracotta pieces imitating the marble ones (Figure 89). These types of artefacts, just as others such as metal vessels, ivory or even glass, were likely reserved for a wealthy elite, and by extension they cannot be representative of the entire Phoenician population (Martin 2017, 67).



Figure 90: A terracotta anthropoid sarcophagus at the National Museum of Archaeology of Valletta, 6th century BCE. Photo author's own.

Adding to this argument is the diversity of funerary customs across the Phoenician and Punic world, sometimes with two or more practices coexisting in the same necropolis (Mura 2016, 104). The often-adopted use of funerary customs to determine identity (see for example Laneri 2007) can thus not be applied to Phoenician material. Given that they exist within this mosaic of practices, anthropoid sarcophagi are one trend among many, none of which has a stronger claim to representing Phoenician identity. The complex history of anthropoid sarcophagi therefore points to a relatively short-lived limited (and expensive) trend which was only prevalent in certain centres. This is, in fact, not uncommon in a number of examples of what is considered typical Phoenician material culture. Not all artefacts have the same distribution and the same popularity through time, and there are a lot of variations between museums as a consequence of this. Anthropoid sarcophagi are a very visible illustration of this phenomenon because of their monumentality and the space they occupy in museums, as well as the scholarly interest they generated.

To stay with funerary customs, we can look at stelae, which also present interesting questions of style and representation. Firstly, the concentration of stelae in museums is extremely contrasted. They are featured in very high numbers at the Louvre, the Bardo Museum, as well as all Sicilian and Sardinian

museums. They are also present in more limited quantities in Lebanon and Cyprus. On the other hand, there are few to no funerary stelae in museums from Malta and Spain. This uneven distribution results in very different curatorial practices. Museums with the most stelae tend to present them in groups, whereas museums with a limited amount single them out and often display them individually. In terms of labelling, stelae are amongst the objects which receive the most attention in museums, which is largely due to the fact that they often hold inscriptions. However, there are also some instances where the labelling details their stylistic characteristics; a notable example being the Museo Marongiu of Cabras where the stelae of the Tharros tophet are divided into categories based on their structural morphology (betyl, cippus, throne, aediculas) and decorative elements (bottle idol, Tanit sign, anthropomorphic figure). There is therefore great variability between stelae of the same origin, and there does not seem to be a predominant type which would be typically Phoenician.

Furthermore, stelae vary greatly from east to west, both in terms of visual properties and context. In fact, while some stelae from Cyprus and the Phoenician coast are funerary, a significant amount point to a more religious nature (Stockton 1974), as attested by the famous example of the stele of Yehawlmilk, now exhibited between the Louvre and the Beirut National Museum (Figure 90). The iconography and inscription on this stele point to a clear dedicatory purpose rather than a funerary one. On the other hand, the countries with the most stelae are the ones with tophets, and therefore the overwhelming majority of these stelae are funerary. These are entirely different from the dedicatory stelae and from other epigraphic stelae with an unclear nature such as the Nora stelae, which gained notoriety from holding the oldest mention of Tarshish and Sardinia (the museum only focuses on the latter) (Lipinski 2004, 238; Schmitz 2011, 16). There are also examples of later (c. 2nd century BCE) stucco painted stelae which take up motifs associated with the Phoenicians such as the caduceus and the Tanit sign, something which museums pick up on. These are notably represented at the Louvre by examples from Sidon and at the Museo Lilibeo with specimens from Marsala (Figure 91). A detailed study of all the variability in stelae of the Phoenician and Punic Mediterranean is well beyond the scope of this thesis. However, this gives yet another glimpse into the complexity of the picture and shows that even though stelae in general are a widespread element, their intended function and stylistic treatment are dependent on many different variables, some of which

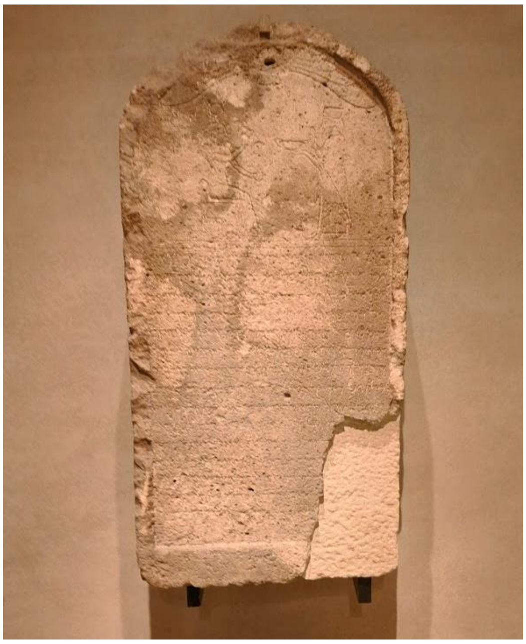


Figure 91: Stele of Yehawmilk at the Louvre, featuring a royal dedicatory inscription, from Byblos, 5th century BCE. Photo author's own.

remain unclear (what is the meaning of the different symbols and shapes of the tophet stelae for example).



Figure 92: Painted stucco stelae at the Louvre and the Museo Lilibeo. Photos author's own.

There are countless examples of how material generally deemed to be Phoenician is in fact more likely a reflection of local fashions, which are more or less popular in certain areas. Again, a whole other thesis could be dedicated to these, but some are worth mentioning briefly. Metal figurines, for example, notably bronzes representing deities are quite popular in the Levant and Spain for a relatively long period, but they are almost absent from the central Mediterranean. In fact, Sardinia has an important tradition of producing metal figurines, but these are associated with the local Nuragic culture and there are very few Iron Age examples that deviate from these (Gonzalez 2012; Russell and Knapp 2017). Therefore, it cannot be argued that native Sardinians did not have the technology to execute metal figurines, and the scarcity of Phoenician figurines in Sardinia stems from a choice still to be understood.

There are also trends which almost do not spread at all beyond the Levantine coast. This is the case of the type of object known as Astarte thrones, which are associated with the Phoenicians at the Beirut National Museum but only know a limited use in the late Iron Age and the Hellenistic period (Figure 92) (Will 1986, 348). The only Astarte throne I saw with a provenance from outside Phoenicia is one from Solunto at the Museo Salinas of Palermo, dated to the 6th century BCE and not called 'Phoenician'. This throne differs from the Levantine ones, which are overwhelmingly aniconic by the anthropomorphic figure seated on it, identified with Astarte (Figure 93).



Figure 93: The display of Astarte thrones at the Beirut National Museum. Public domain.

Just as the Astarte thrones are limited to the Phoenician coast, other artefacts commonly associated with the Phoenicians are in fact only found in the central and western Mediterranean. This is the case of bronze razors, which are often interpreted as ritualistic or votive (Acquaro 1971). These are often called 'Punic' by museums with little controversy as to the designation since they are mostly found in funerary contexts in the central and western Mediterranean. They can vary in terms of style and decoration (as some are plain and some are engraved) and they can have a handle in the shape of a bird's head, but this is not always the case.



Figure 94: The Astarte throne at the Museo Salinas. Photo author's own.

Ostrich eggs are also exclusive to the central and western Mediterranean (at least in their museum appearances, although they have been found all around the Mediterranean since the Bronze Age (Hodos et. al. 2020)). They are often painted, which has led some museums to present them from a stylistic point of view. The Louvre for instance, associates a particular ostrich egg from Algeria with Phoenician ivories from Assyria because of its decoration (Figure 94). Most museums which display these artefacts call them 'Phoenician' or 'Punic' and mention their popularity in the Phoenician world as they

define them. Because the majority of these museums are in the central and western Mediterranean, they do not mention the fact that ostrich eggs are not found in the east and simply treat them in their own contexts.



Figure 95: A painted ostrich egg from Algeria, 7th century BCE, at the Louvre. Photo author's own.

In summary, not all artefacts which are ascribed to the Phoenicians know the same distribution and popularity across the Mediterranean. There is a high degree of variability which would point to localised and temporary fashions rather than a broadly defined purely Phoenician style, applicable to all artefacts all over the Phoenician world. A lot of these trends originated in Egypt, and some took on a Greek character, which led to the misleading idea of hybridity. However, a worthwhile comparison can be done with the Late Bronze Age Mediterranean, showing that the over reliance on style and separate cultural entities is not the only possible paradigm. Finds from this period, most notably from the Uluburun shipwreck, point to a world system made of many entangled networks communicating with each other without a centralised core (Hodos 2009, 224). In terms of material culture, this translates to something referred to as the Late Bronze Age international style, which were usually luxury objects catered for elites around the (mostly eastern) Mediterranean (Manning and Hulin 2008; Feldman 2002; Knapp 1998; Sherratt and Sherratt 1991). Following the (now very much contested) crisis of 1200 BCE, this connectivity disappears from the narrative of archaeologists and museums who group Iron Age material in cultural bubbles such as Phoenician, Etruscan, or Oriental, beginning to pave the way for the standardisation brought about by the Roman Empire. A potential explanation for the more nuanced approach to the Late Bronze Age is the legacy of classics, given that the classical authors, while not really addressing this period, divide the peoples of the first millennium BCE Mediterranean into many ethnic categories. However, with the advent of studies favouring continuity and pre-colonial contacts in the early Iron Age (Sommer 2007, 100; Celestino-Perez 2009, 230; Perez and Lopez Ruiz 2016, 150), a revised approach to the Phoenician material is needed (Aruz et al. 2014, 2; Tubb 2014, 132; Fontan and Le Meaux 2007, 18).

The material which has traditionally been labelled as Phoenician based on stylistic criteria, notably artefacts such as tridacna shells, metal bowls and ivories, are generally decontextualized artefacts and we have seen that they can no longer be taken as true staples of Phoenician style. They are in fact, quite rare and expensive items, as attested by their limited appearances in museums, notably compared to other assemblages such as the stelae or pottery. The fact that they are often associated with elite classes (the ivories from the royal palaces of Nimrud, metal bowls in rich Etruscan tombs etc...) combined with their almost complete absence from Phoenician cities point to a system where these artefacts would have been specifically manufactured for and catered to certain wealthy social groups around

the Mediterranean and the Near East (Martin 2017, 96). Consequently, this would indicate a world system comparable to the Late Bronze Age one, with perhaps more complexity in terms of scale and local interactions. If the stylistic analysis of Phoenician material yields anything concrete, it shows that the essence of Phoenician identity resides in the microcosms of trends it generates.

Stylistic issues, a summary

In this chapter, we saw that Phoenician style is a complicated construct. It borrows art historical concepts and inherits a legacy of classical perceptions which contributed to a *faute de mieux* definition of what constitutes Phoenician identity which has been impacting said collections from the 19th century to this day. The history of museums themselves is deeply entangled with that of Phoenician studies, unravelling layers of defining, redefining, exhibiting, and labelling artefacts. However, museums also help understand the nuances of various approaches when it comes to dealing with Phoenician style. We saw that iconographical based definitions are no longer valid, but that the issues with the term 'Orientalizing' cannot so easily be dismissed. We also saw that many museums take a technological approach to style, in line with the stereotype of craftsmanship they often reiterate. Finally, we saw the tremendous variability when it comes to the distribution and durability of artefacts typically called 'Phoenician', in museums and elsewhere.

This wraps up the data-based section of this thesis. While tracking trends at the level of the museums and stereotypes at the level of the labelling was relatively straightforward and generated data that could be categorised to some extent, focusing on artefacts and style truly revealed the intricacies of each museum. With the legacy of the stylistic approach, it is no longer a question of every museum's narrative, or a certain policy they follow which could be common to several museums. Each object, no matter its level of decontextualization, has its own individual story from recovery to interpretation to display, and the examples discussed to illustrate theoretical stakes of style should therefore not be taken as universally applicable.

In the next chapter, I will bring all these pieces together, integrating historical and literary perceptions with trends at the level of the museum, the labelling, and the objects in order to understand the possibilities of where Phoenician displays can go from here.

Part 3 | Interwoven perceptions

Chapter 6 | Revisiting the museums

Now that we have tackled the most important tendencies emerging from the displays of Phoenician collections, it is now possible to bring these together and draw some conclusions. There is still a lot to say about how the collections in various museums connect through their ties in historical and archaeological studies, and much to propose in terms of rethinking and approaching this material from a different perspective. This chapter will therefore attempt to untangle these ideas, drawing on five main concepts. I will begin by going back to the literary and historical legacy of Phoenician perceptions, assessing its impact and degree of visibility in museums. This will lead back to questions about the definition of Phoenician identity and how it has been conceived as an identity of objects rather than an identity of people. I will then retrace the trends that make each museum, summarizing the most significant factors affecting the Phoenician collections in order to then explore possible ways of bringing this material together, and finishing up with some concluding thoughts on contextuality.

A legacy too large for labels

Chapter 2 showed the extent to which perceptions of Phoenician identity have been changing, constructed, and manipulated from Antiquity to this day. In Chapter 5, we also saw how some of these perceptions, notably those prevalent in 19th-century Europe, have shaped the way Phoenician collections were originally defined. However, it can be challenging to recognize the impact of historical perceptions on museum displays. Only the Museo Arqueológico Nacional of Spain has a display dedicated to its history, yet this is still more closely related to the architecture of the building and the movement of the collections than to their historical perceptions. Other museums, like the Louvre for example, include the source of artefacts on their labels, which can be helpful in terms of indicating roughly when they arrived at the museum and whether they were contextual. Nevertheless, these occurrences are rather rare, and they do not always make the relationship between the origin of a certain artefact and the way it is displayed evident. In sum, the way I was able to detect important historical fluctuations within museums was mainly through discussions with curators, consulting old guides, and detecting specific artefacts mentioned in early publications.

This means that the historical and literary perceptions of the Phoenicians are almost invisible to the visitors. When they are available, they usually focus on either of two main ones: the history of the collections or the more ancient classical perceptions. At the Museo de Málaga, we see one of the most evident examples of the approach focusing on the history of the Phoenician collections specifically, with the interpretation about Schulten and the premises which led to the discovery of the site. We also saw that a large number of museums introduce the classical perceptions in one way or another. When they do so, it is often in order to frame the reputation of the Phoenicians for a specific aspect, such as

maritime trade or the alphabet. What we seldom see alongside mentions of the classical authors is how much their vision impacted later ideas about the Phoenicians, including those presented in the museum. Following this tendency, we also see an almost complete absence in terms of discussing the historiography of Phoenician archaeology, and perhaps more importantly, barely anything is ever said about the political contexts and implications surrounding the Phoenician collections at various moments in time.

This is significant because conversations with curators showed that this context had an impact on the display of the material in question, at least in a few museums, notably the British Museum, the Museo Archeologico Nazionale, and the Museo de Cádiz. The question thus reveals itself: why is there no mention of the impact of literary and historical perceptions of the Phoenicians in museums where these collections have been affected by the perceptions? A major factor here could simply be the spatial restrictions linked with labelling and interpretation. As museums prioritise information linked to artefacts and work their way up from there, there might be no space left to allocate visibility to the polemics about the Phoenicians. Moreover, Phoenician collections have a complex history the nuances of which can be difficult to summarise. As such, it would be challenging (although not impossible) for museums to extract information about the historical and literary legacy relevant to their own collections in order to communicate it.

At the same time, long interpretation panels might not be the ideal vehicle to transmit this type of information. It can serve well if utilised in a judicious way, like in the Museo de Málaga where the segment about the history of the collection serves as an introduction to the Phoenician section of the museum. However, in museums without a geographic or chronological division at a high level, where the Phoenician collections are scattered throughout, it would not make sense to place a general panel about them. Moreover, this type of labelling can be disconnected from the actual artefacts, which might distract visitors from taking the time to read about the history and legacy of the collections (Eisner and Dobbs 1988, 13; Skeates 2002, 209).

To an extent, we can question whether it is the role of the museum to bring up the often-controversial histories of perceptions of Phoenician collections. We saw for example the intended neutrality concerning this at the Beirut National Museum which contrasts with the many strong historical and popular opinions about the Phoenicians in Lebanon. While the Phoenicians leave no one indifferent outside the museum, these debates are in no way reflected inside the exhibition space. This example proves that museums can detach themselves almost entirely from the historic and popular debacles surrounding their collections.

However, I would argue that while a neutral or objective point of view can result in very clean and understandable displays, it also takes away from the history of the artefacts. In fact, one of the main outcomes of this thesis showed the weight of carrying the label 'Phoenician' for an artefact. In other words, Phoenician artefacts hold the value of not only the multitude of meanings that comes along

with any archaeological material, but also layers of meanings from their history of perception and interpretation. The responsibility to transmit these meanings falls with the institutions hosting and presenting these artefacts. Because of the role external perceptions have played in the history of these artefacts, be it in terms of colonialism, orientalism, or local nationalisms, limiting displays to their archaeological or art historical value can be comparable to stripping them of their archaeological context.

Having said that, it does not mean that every museum with a Phoenician collection needs to have extensive labelling about these historical stakes. In fact, the manner in which particular artefacts are displayed can tell a story about their perceptions, even if it is not as explicit as a text-based narrative (Yanow 1998, 216; Watson and Waterton 2010, 86). For example, the proximity of the Cypriot collections to the Phoenician ones at the British Museum despite the fact that they belong to two different departments is a subtle reference to their close links and to the fact that they were grouped together for a long time (Kiely 2018, pers. comm.). Another form of acknowledging the history of the collections can be found at the Whitaker museum in Mozia, where the original display cases and setup of the museum have been preserved in one gallery, showing the vision of Whitaker (Toti 2019, pers. comm.). The bronze figurine from Cádiz in the Phoenician Influences in the Mediterranean gallery at the Louvre is also an example of a single artefact relating a long tradition of associating the Phoenicians to a bridge between Eastern and Western cultures.

In summary, there is definite evidence that historical and literary perceptions of the Phoenicians have influenced the display of Phoenician material in a lot of museums. However, not all museums are explicit about this in their interpretation, sometimes choosing to detach themselves from this legacy as much as possible. That said, it is possible to trace it back through some specific curatorial practices through which the museums allude to historical ideas relevant to a particular artefact or collection. The intrinsic link between Phoenician artefacts, their historical associations and their interpretations is therefore expressed in various ways depending on relevance within the context of each particular museum.

An identity of objects

There is something to unpack in taking further the idea that the way collections are displayed can reflect on their historical interpretative legacy. Let us consider an artefact in a museum without much documentation about the complex history of Phoenician studies and its implications. Given how many museums reiterate stereotypes about the Phoenicians, it is likely that said artefact will be displayed within a showcase relating it to at least one of these stereotypes (likely maritime trade, since it is the most common across all museums). I am not focusing on any particular artefact here because this type of display could apply to a large number of objects within the dataset (in fact, most of them are linked

to a stereotype in one way or another). This artefact would therefore be presented as a symbol of a certain aspect of Phoenician culture, without much information as to how this came to be.

This is a phenomenon which happens relatively frequently in museums without being questioned: identities of people are reduced to artefacts (Tilley 2006, 17; MacDonald 2012, 3). In the case of the Phoenicians, it is precisely the historical legacy of these artefacts which led to this point. To take a simplified example, the Phoenicians were considered to be the inventors of glass in the classical sources. From there, this association lived on through early studies, a series of exhibitions, until it reached current handbooks. In the meantime, museums owning Phoenician glass artefacts proceeded to highlight them and present them as distinct from other (earlier, later, or found elsewhere) glass objects. As such, what was happening in parallel within museums, academia, and popular culture was the ascription of identity to objects based on an external perception. Because of this perception, glass was associated with the Phoenicians and singled out.

We saw something similar happen with style. While the majority of artefacts with a consistent and non-controversial individual designation as Phoenician are either inscribed, originating from known contexts, or exhibiting clear consistency (like pottery), objects labelled as such based on their style tends to be unfamiliar material from unknown contexts. When non-contextual material is placed in a Phoenician showcase, it is always the product of a hypothetical decision, usually favoured by a certain similarity between the artefact in question and other contextual specimens. However, it is also holding with it the legacy of early archaeological sources deeming it to be Phoenician because of its so-called hybridity. The malleability of the term 'Phoenician' itself also permits this type of association in museums. We have seen the case of the Louvre, for example, which uses the term 'Phoenician' primarily as a geographical marker, allowing it to place a larger quantity of artefacts within its boundaries of what constitutes Phoenician material.

Paradoxically however, because stylistic designations are both difficult to trace and relatively infrequent in museums, museums can provide an alternative way of thinking about Phoenician collections. As we saw, every museum approaches the collection from a certain perspective, and 'Phoenician' does not mean the same thing in all of them, as opposed to handbooks and literature attempting to be comprehensive and thus grouping artefacts into taxonomic categories which are not always relevant. For instance, technology might offer an interesting alternative to the focus on style or the craftsmanship stereotype. If we go back to the basis of what brings both of these concepts together, technology can be considered a first factor of stylistic distinction. This would lead to an approach based on object biographies, which could be more adapted to the context of the first millennium BCE Mediterranean. The unprecedented amount of connectivity and exchanges taking place at the time entails that artefacts would take on shifting meanings throughout their lifetime, including post-deposition and recovery, leading to their current placement in museums. It might

therefore be more useful to consider the contexts of artefacts and their histories rather than focus on assemblages of similar looking but isolated objects.

This would be one of countless possibilities of shifting the focus of Phoenician collections from individual artefacts to people, networks, and connections. In a lot of instances, this material has also been separated between everyday objects (for the less impressive material such as plain pottery) and luxury goods (Martin 2017, 30). Again, this is a reflection of objectifying Phoenician identity. The distinction between everyday and luxury comes from a more recent perception and is partly linked with the findspots of artefacts. Considering that the earliest pieces of interest in terms of Phoenician archaeology were metal bowls or ivories found outside Phoenician sites, this goes to show how early scholars looked for the Phoenicians in these objects. However, the artisans crafting luxury goods were also using plain pottery on a daily basis, and so were the recipients of these luxury objects. Consequently, these artefacts cannot be dissociated from their makers and consumers and haphazardly ascribed identities.

Thus, the stereotypical and stylistic basis which has been used to define the term 'Phoenician' has made it an identity of objects rather than an identity of people (Riva and Vella 2006, 13). While the stylistic approach is not prevalent in museums, the stereotypes are often reiterated and inform the displays. Through their reliance on stereotypes, museums indirectly define Phoenician identity the same way archaeologists and historians have been doing so for centuries. However, the question of Phoenician identity is not as explicitly presented in their general narratives, and perhaps this is key. Rather than questioning whether what we call 'Phoenician artefacts' are representative of Phoenician identity and looking for the Phoenicians in them, there might be something to explore when looking at the objects themselves in order to extract information from them.

The pattern is a lack of pattern

In fact, some museums are already starting to take this approach. We saw for example that the Cyprus Museum, despite its outdated displays and shortfalls in terms of integrating the Phoenician material, expressed a will to change entirely in its projected new building. The narrative will not be based on a separation by materials but on a conceptual and thematic perspective of the history of Cyprus (Pilides 2019, pers. comm.). We see this in other museums already, such as the Museo Arqueológico Nacional which does its best to convey a clear picture of Iron Age Spain within the mosaic of cultures synonymous with this period (Rodero 2019, pers. comm.). In the next part, I will be taking this point further in order to explore possible ways of bringing these collections together across museums.

However, I would now like to come back to an essential objective of this thesis: detecting patterns in the displays of Phoenician collections. While at the start of this thesis the assumption might have been that there may be specific ideas or processes affecting the displays in all museums, and that we may have been able to draw a clear and comprehensive conclusion from it, the reality of things is that the

displays are far too complex to be summarised in such a simple way. However, in order to visualise this phenomenon, I have created charts showing the most impactful elements in each museum (Appendix 3). All the examples mentioned on the charts have been addressed at some point earlier in the thesis (usually in the corresponding chapter), so I will not be going back to them one by one. The charts serve as a summary of the most notable trends in each museum, given that so far, I have been merging examples from multiple museums. This is therefore a way to examine the data from the perspective of individual museums and understand how all these factors work together within a single space.

After three chapters of analysis, the emerging picture is far from uniform. If there is anything to take out from it, it is that there are no two museums with the exact same pattern of display and the exact same factors affecting this. Throughout this thesis, I focused on four main impactful elements: the historical and literary legacy of external perceptions (Chapter 2); the mappable patterns and trends (Chapter 3); the expression of stereotypes (Chapter 4); and the use of style (Chapter 5). The combination of these results in the particular 'ecosystem' of every one of the twenty museums. Within each of these categories, the most relevant examples are listed. For instance, the legacy of the Cypriot museums is the proximity to Greek identity; the most noteworthy cues in the Museo Lilibeo of Marsala are definition and curatorial path; the stereotypes the Bardo Museum plays on are craftsmanship and the alphabet; the stylistic approach is reflected through glass at the AUB museum and more.

It is interesting to note the variability in terms of what elements are the most impactful in each museum, which ranges from all four categories in eight museums to just one at the Museo de Huelva. Another thing to point out is that the scale of the museum has nothing to do with how many impactful elements it holds. While it is true that both international museums offer multiple case studies, this is also the case of many smaller museums such as the AUB Museum, the three Sardinian museums and the Museo Whitaker of Mozia. At the same time, these are not necessarily the oldest museums, just like the Museo de Huelva is not the youngest one. The size of the Phoenician collection of each museum is also unrelated to how many of the legacy, cues, stereotypes, and stylistic examples are reflected in the displays: the British Museum has one of the smallest Phoenician collections yet it still presents various examples of all these cases; while the Idalion museum's collection is almost exclusively Phoenician yet the only notable things about it are that it is the youngest museum in the dataset and that it presents some interesting curatorial choices. All in all, this shows that there is no one particular factor in determining how many impactful elements can be found in one museum or another. Every museum is unique in its presentation of the Phoenician collections. Some carry a heavy legacy from historical perspectives, while others may not be affected by this but choose to reinforce many of the stereotypes linked with the Phoenicians. Some present many illustrations of the different cues which affect their displays and others have more examples useful to study and question the definition of

Phoenician style. In the end, it is the sum of all these factors which make the specificities of each museum display.

Having said that, it is worth noting that there are still some common traits linking groups of museums together. For example, we saw the local nationalisms affecting museums in Cyprus and Sardinia in different ways. Moreover, museums which were not designed as such all have considerations to make in terms of architecture. In terms of stereotypes, we see maritime trade taking on some importance in most museums of the central and western Mediterranean because of its link to the founding of relevant sites. Finally, we also saw the particular treatment of jewellery in museums which display jewels from Tharros, notably the British Museum and the Museo Archeologico Nazionale of Cagliari when discussing style. Despite the fact that the combination of elements affecting its displays is unique to each museum, there are therefore some common threads linking aspects of displays in different museums together.

Bringing collections together

Everything we have discussed so far comes down to a simple summary: Phoenician artefacts are scattered across museums, which all treat them differently, some with a visible legacy of historical and literary perceptions and others less so. While the artefacts and assemblages may be similar across the board and form a relatively unified group, each museum has a completely unique set up when it comes to displaying them. On the one hand, this is interesting because it provides good insights as to the perceptions of these collections within the context of each country or museum and allows them to be encountered by a wide variety of visitors given their scattered distribution. On the other hand, these collections are complementary, sometimes to the extent where the same object is in two different museums. For example, each of the Louvre and the Beirut National Museum hold half of an inscribed solar panel from Umm El Amed, each museum acknowledging the location of the other half on the label. We also saw that the material from Tharros is scattered between three museums, as is the material from Carthage, showing how artefacts from the same site can end up at different museums in the same country or abroad. Even if we consider the material from Malta, however, which is primarily at the National Museum in Valletta, it would still benefit from being viewed alongside material from the Levantine coast or other areas in the Mediterranean. This actually might be one of the reasons behind the extensive labelling at the Valetta Museum, bringing the material back into its wider context. Therefore, if we want to take a big picture approach, all the Phoenician collections are incomplete in their individual existence in separate museums.

At the same time, there is no realistic way of bringing them all together in the foreseeable future. Even if we consider repatriation from the international museums, the material originates from different countries and will thus stay spread out across the Mediterranean. There are, however, some initiatives to bring the Phoenician world together, a notable one being the network known as 'The Phoenician's

Route'. This is an EU project founded in 2003 which aims to bring together sites located along the ancient Phoenician network, most members are sites or municipalities (Messineo 2012, 44; The Phoenician's Route 2017). This includes a section dedicated to museums, but it is unclear how the network functions at this level and none of the museums in this thesis are part of it. And while such initiatives are interesting in terms of creating connexions across the Mediterranean, they tend to be more focused on the touristic aspect than the academic one.

Temporary exhibitions have been one of the more formal ways to bring Phoenician collections together. The first major exhibition exclusively dedicated to the Phoenicians was entitled 'I Fenici' and inaugurated in Venice in 1988 (Moscati 1988, Vella 1996, 246). This came relatively late considering that Phoenician material had already been studied and collected by museums for over a century before. However, we saw in Chapter 2 that this material had been forgotten and understudied until the second half of the 20th century. The 'I Fenici' exhibition (curated by Moscati) therefore marked the pinnacle of the renaissance of Phoenician studies (Vella 1996, 246). Since then, there have not been many large comprehensive exhibitions about the Phoenicians. The most notable one is 'La Mediterranée des Phéniciens de Tyr à Carthage', which took place at the Arab World Institute in Paris in 2007 (Fontan and Le Meaux 2007). This exhibition was substantial, gathering materials from almost every museum owning Phoenician artefacts. In 2014, the Metropolitan Museum of Art hosted an exhibition entitled 'Assyria to Iberia at the dawn of the classical age' (Aruz et al. 2014). While this was not exclusively dedicated to the Phoenicians, they were featured prominently given their role in this network. More recently, in 2019-2020, the Colosseum of Rome organised an exhibition entitled 'Carthage: the immortal myth' (Russo et al. 2019; Bartoloni 2020). And while this was more focused on the Punic world, it did include artefacts from the Beirut National Museum and a section on the Phoenician east. Because I have not been able to see the exhibitions in person, I will not rely too heavily on catalogues and publications to comment on them. However, there are some conclusions to draw out of them. Firstly, it is striking that there have only been two major international exhibitions dedicated to the Phoenicians. If we compare this with exhibitions about the Greeks or Romans, we can notice the echo of the classical-centric pattern we saw in literature and academia. So, despite renewed scholarly interest, ongoing excavations and publications, and good visibility in local museums, the Phoenicians seem to remain less attractive to important funding bodies and decision makers in cultural programming of large-scale museums and institutions. Given that many of the museums I visited have updated their displays and narratives since 2007, the date of the last exclusive exhibition, it might be interesting to revisit these collections and present them in a more relevant way than by craftsmanship categories and stereotypical themes, a pattern some of these exhibitions have been criticised for (Quinn 2018, 23; Bartoloni 2020, 3).

This brings me to my next point. Given the connectivity in the first millennium BCE Mediterranean and the ideas of contextuality and integration we explored in Chapter 5, exhibiting and displaying the

Phoenicians in isolation might not be the most relevant approach. In order to understand these collections, we probably need to look at how they existed and interacted in their particular contexts but also their world-system. 'Assyria to Iberia at the dawn of the classical age' is a step in this direction. Instead of generic themes such as religion, the alphabet, maritime expansion, or material categories other exhibitions about the Phoenicians have focused on, it incorporates some of these into larger questions such as the Late Bronze Age transition and the Orientalizing debate (Aruz et al. 2014; Thomason and Cifarelli 2015, 114). Admittedly, the exhibition was still largely focused on the influence of the Assyrian empire on the development and expansion of Mediterranean culture in the Iron Age, but it was successful in achieving an overall picture of connectivity and interactions (Aruz and Rakic 2019, 119). Future exhibitions can build on this to bring the Phoenician collections together and make sense of them not only as standalone objects but alongside all the material it communicated with, from local productions to Greek, Egyptian and Etruscan artefacts.

However, as we saw, incorporating this narrative in museums, especially those with a collection limited to a single site or a few local ones, is another matter. Since it is unlikely that all the Phoenician and Punic material will ever be physically reunited in a permanent way, an alternative approach might look more virtual. In fact, a number of the museums I visited already have open access online databases in which their Phoenician collections are relatively easy to find. However, a centralised database in which all Phoenician collections would be reunited does not exist to this date, despite the fact that this has already been called for (Fantar 2014, 52.) It could be an interesting and relatively easy to implement follow up project to this thesis. From there, anyone would be able to access the material and new perspectives might emerge from bringing it all together in a more visible and approachable way than visiting every museum which owns Phoenician material. If the collections were to be reunited in a centralised database, we might finally be able to start looking at the artefacts and stop looking for the Phoenicians.

For now, though, Phoenician collections remain scattered in over twenty museums around the world. Despite having been brought together on occasion through temporary exhibitions, they remain exclusive to each museum they belong to. This means that their interpretation and display in every museum is dependent on their place within the narrative of each museum. In fact, perhaps the only way to bring them together in a 'neutral' space would be to create a database reuniting them all outside the physical space of the museum.

Perpetual contextuality

While the idea of an open access database is attractive, it offers one major drawback (aside from the bureaucratic elements of funding and staffing). I have been arguing throughout this thesis that artefacts are only valid within a context. This can mean the various cycles of production and consumption they have been through, their final deposition setting, the conditions of their

archaeological recovery, or the historical and political setting at the time they were studied. The museum they belong to and the place they occupy within this museum are also elements of an artefact's contextuality. Therefore, a comprehensive database would ideally need to include information about the history of display of every artefact in order not to take away from its contextual value.

In fact, everything we have explored in this thesis so far comes back to the idea of contextuality. Collections are only relevant in their context and because of their context. When discussing historical and popular perceptions and their legacy, we saw that the current place of artefacts in certain museums was often the result of the political climate at the time of their discovery. Moreover, the prevalent perspectives at certain times resulted in the increased interest in particular types of objects while others were left in the shadows. Phoenician collections have been affected by a series of interconnected perspectives which have led to where they are today. We can think of every artefact as the central element in a series of chains, each link representing a different perception which acts as a trigger for the current interpretation of the artefact.

Historical perceptions are not the only contextual factors affecting the artefacts, however, and the metaphor is thus much more complex. When analysing the data from the museums in Chapter 3, we also saw how certain cues can affect the collections. I have already discussed this at length, but an important conclusion from this is not which cues are more prevalent in which museum and why, it is the fact that there is no uniformity when it comes to the most notable elements of each museum. This shows the contextuality linked to the setting of each museum: objects at the Louvre might be called 'Phoenician' despite their later date because of how the museum defines Phoenicia; museums with artefacts originating from a wide array of sites have entirely different setups than site museums; museums with a high frequency of mention of the term 'Phoenician' tend to have more labelling but this does not mean that the Phoenicians take on more importance than other collections; Phoenician artefacts in Valletta are all concentrated in a single gallery whereas they are spread across the museum in Cagliari; museums which were not built as such have to take their original architecture into account; the size of the Amathus vase imposes a certain setup at the Louvre; some curators make choices which affect the displays, for instance. These are all examples of particular factors within each museum, showing that the context of the museum itself plays a major role in the interpretation of the collections.

We also saw that the use of particular stereotypes in particular museums is also linked to the context of the museum. As such, museums of the western Mediterranean focus more on maritime trade and displays about tophets only exist in museums with relevant collections. Museums therefore choose to highlight certain stereotypes and associations based on the contexts of their own collections as well as what they feel is most relevant in terms of the global narrative they are trying to construct.

In Chapter 5, when discussing style, the issue of contextuality was also particularly clear, although we approached it from another angle. In this case, it is often artefacts without a secure archaeological contexts that have been ascribed a Phoenician definition on stylistic bases, and it is this absence of context which has led to the ambiguous and misleading use of the term 'Phoenician', sometimes confusing itself with definitions of Oriental and Orientalizing. Reconsidering Phoenician style showed that context can be fabricated, and identities can be shaped: these objects which effectively had lost some of their archaeological value had initially been analysed and evaluated based on artistic criteria. This artistic judgement is in fact a constructed value relying upon contemporary (or in this case 19th-century) attributes of style. They were therefore not explored in their archaeological context but in an artistic one, which later affected their interpretation and display. Artistically valuable artefacts entered the collections of international museums such as the British Museum, the Louvre, and the Met because of this context and climate (Sader 2016, 59).

However, the story of Phoenician artefacts is not anchored in the 19th century, nor in the excavations of Málaga, nor in 800 BCE Tyre. As a matter of fact, contextuality is not static. Artefacts, Phoenician ones in particular, are bound to a series of contexts which have all had a more or less important impact on where they are now and how they are interpreted, which is itself a context. One of the main issues I encountered when looking at them through the lens of style is that style is often considered a rigid concept which transcends history, hence why the lack of an archaeological background was not always relevant to early students of the Phoenicians (Feldman 2014). In this perspective, Phoenician style supposedly represents a timeless snapshot of the culture and identity. However, we saw that style, just as context, is a mutable principle. This was clear in the example of red slip pottery being adapted to slightly different shapes in different sites, and in the iterations of anthropoid sarcophagi in marble as well as terracotta. There is not only one way to define Phoenician style just as there is not only one way to interpret and display Phoenician collections.

Rather, the quality of being Phoenician (let us call this Phoenicianity for the sake of simplicity) is a dynamic and constantly shifting process. It has been shaped by external perceptions, and even incepted by these since the first grouping of these people and artefacts was done by the Greeks. However, the material and epigraphic evidence show that there is a guiding thread in Phoenician culture, despite the fact that it was externally defined. This guiding line is not straight or continuous because of the constant evolving of the material over more than a millennium, the wide range of artefacts produced and consumed, and the interactions with various people around the Mediterranean which produced local variability. Phoenicianity is therefore a mutable quality and cannot be reduced to hybridity in the iconography of metal bowls, the existence of a Tanit sign on a stele, or glass beads in the form of faces. It transcends the materiality of artefacts and includes the people who produced and consumed these objects, as well as those who interacted with them. This means that it was permanently shifting, as identities do, which is what makes it so elusive and leads

to the diversity we saw in museum displays. The fact that many of the museums have updated their displays of the Phoenician collections in the last 5-10 years or have plans to do so in the near future also reflect the ever-shifting aspect of this narrative.

In fact, this thesis itself is a reflection of the stakes of Phoenicianity. It was completed in a three-year period during which museums did not stop evolving. The interpretation at the Louvre was in the process of being updated and labels changed partially between 2018 and 2020; artefacts in several museums were temporarily removed to be featured in the Carthage exhibition at the Colosseum; the director of the AUB Museum retired so one might expect some change in the coming years; and countless other shifts and changes that I might not be aware of happened. The Carthage and Larnaca museums will hopefully be open again soon with more interpretations and perceptions to bring to the table. The work does not end here. Phoenicianity will continue to transform as a mutable concept in a multitude of contexts as long as museums are displaying Phoenician material while retaining its core guiding thread.

Chapter 7 | Conclusion: open ends

From identity to contextuality, a summary

This thesis started from one object and ended up encompassing thousands. The initial aim was to explore Phoenician identity through the lens of historical and museological perceptions. As I moved through museums, however, it became increasingly clear that the only way to approach identity in this case was through contextuality. By now, the links between narratives, artefacts, and museums and how these features overlap contextually to create perceptions of identities have been established. Of course, the scope of this thesis does not allow for an in-depth exploration of all these connections, which are numerous, but I hope to have achieved an understanding of how they can be dismantled and how they function.

Throughout this work, I regularly shifted the focus from notable details to the big picture in order to align with the theme and provide a shift in perceptions. In Chapter 1, I tackled some theoretical issues linked with identity and museums, moving from individual objects to displays, museums, and wider narratives. This chapter laid out the main themes of the thesis, which were then echoed in subsequent parts and served as a framework on which I based myself. Chapter 2 followed a more traditional chronological structure where I started exploring perceptions of the Phoenicians in literature more precisely. This chapter moved from ancient sources such as Assyrian and Egyptian texts, the Bible, and Greek and Latin authors to 19^{th-}century European perceptions, before tackling the post-colonial world and the shifting ideas about Phoenician identity in archaeological thought as well as pop culture. The main outtake from Chapter 2 was therefore the malleability of Phoenician identity, paving the way for Part 2 of the thesis and the analysis of museum collections. This part focused on three main spheres of interaction, each at a different level of the museum, and ordered from broadest to narrowest. Therefore, Chapter 3 focused on the mappable trends and patterns which emerged at the level of the museum. It showed how cues such as definition, frequency, and curatorial path shape each collection and how these different cues interact with one another to create individual cases. This was the first step in tracing common points and differences between perceptions in different museums. In Chapter 4, I explored these interactions at the level of the labelling by looking at the potential reinforcement of literary stereotypes associated with the Phoenicians in museums. The interplay between the five principal stereotypes showed a strong inheritance from literature as well as some localised trends. The historical and literary legacy, especially that of the 19th century, featured prominently in Chapter 5, which consisted of a deconstruction of Phoenician style. This chapter tackled some of the main stakes associated with Phoenician style, notably the issues of decontextualization, the over-reliance on iconography, the orientalist use of 'Orientalizing', technology as a component of style, and the diversity of scales and fashions which make Phoenician style so elusive to define. This was punctuated by examples of specific artefacts and assemblages,

shifting the perspective to the level of individual objects, the way the thesis began. Finally, Chapter 6 served as a vector to bring all the observations noted in the previous chapters together. The main conclusions that can be drawn involve firstly the ideas about historical and literary legacy, which has affected the museums in several ways but is not always explicitly presented on labels, for reasons that differ from one museum to another. This legacy has made of Phoenician identity an objectified one, stirring away from people and focusing on artefacts. Another important point made is the fact that a unified way of displaying Phoenician collections does not exist, and while some trends can be traced between museums of the same country or of the same nature, each display is unique to its particular context. Bringing these together would involve a digital approach which would still need to take into account their museum lives and histories. In the end, everything we explored throughout this research came down to issues of contextuality, be it in terms of the environment of each museum, varying political climates, or the archaeological contexts of artefacts.

This thesis therefore set out as a quest to deconstruct Phoenician identity, but it lands on other theoretical grounds. Throughout this analysis of perceptions, I have found that the markers of what constitutes Phoenician identity shift according to some set factors. The first one is perspective, that of the archaeologist, curator, or museum visitor, who will all apply different criteria to their analysis and observation. The second factor is the history of particular artefacts, both pre- and post-excavations, which imply different things about the people who made, used, discarded, collected, displayed, and analysed them. The third factor is the space surrounding people and artefacts, bringing them together and affecting their interactions with one another. In sum, the trilogy of people, artefacts and museums are what generate unique perceptions of Phoenician identity. The multiplicity of these elements is what makes it so elusive to define and what brought about this shift from a focus on identity to a focus on contextuality.

Ever shifting perceptions

The emphasis on contextuality this work has led to also highlights an important aspect of it: the fact that it is itself a product of context. This thesis represents a three-year snapshot of the states of some museums between 2017 and 2020. However, as we saw, displays are not frozen in time, and the research I conducted is especially relevant to its own particular timeframe and climate. That being said, one of the main impacts of this project is that it is transferable and applicable to different times and spaces. Phoenician collections offer their own peculiarities. For example, Greek or Roman collections might not be as heavily laden with stereotypes, Egyptian collections tend to originate from more secure contexts and benefit from a much more specialized and precise academic framework to their study, and Assyrian and Babylonian collections are more anchored into the discipline of the Ancient Near East which in turn has different implications in terms of how all these collections are displayed. The Phoenician material, as we saw throughout this thesis, is exhibited in a specific way

because of a series of parameters unique to these collections. However, different collections can also be studied through a comparable lens, looking for the perceptions that have affected their displays and following a similar methodology to the one adopted in this thesis.

Therefore, even though this work is tightly linked to the context in which it was produced, its impact lies in its ability to be adapted. At the same time, this thesis could only be contextual because it exists in a world of perpetually changing museums, shifting archaeological thought, and moving pop culture. The work itself should, consequently, be viewed as a fluid study which can be infinitely adapted as long as the concept of Phoenicianity remains mutable. In other words, we cannot define Phoenicianity in rigid or static terms, and so we cannot claim to produce a study of it set in stone. This is also why we moved from identity to contextuality as a main theme to explore. It is clear by now that there is no one definitive answer to the question of Phoenician identity, which is shifting and mutating according to perceptions and context. As a result, so are Phoenician collections, and so is any project studying them.

More museums to visit

Furthering this argument is the pattern of change taking over quite a few museums around the Mediterranean. First, there are the museums which I was not able to visit at all because they were closed for renovation. These include some institutions which would have been key to a more holistic understanding of Phoenician collections, such as the Carthage Museum. This was obviously the biggest gap since it is host to much of the material from Carthage, only a portion of which I was able to interact with between the Louvre and the Bardo Museum. When I visited Tunis in spring 2018, the museum, which had been partially open for a number of years, had recently fully closed and started storing artefacts in order for the renovation works to start. There is no indication as to when it will open again, but its lengthy - if partial - closure has led some academics to expect considerable change and the rebirth of the Carthage museum as a more interactive interpretation centre, adapted to its environment (Jaidi 2016).

Two notable museums which were also closed for renovation at the time of my visit are the Paphos and Larnaca museums, both in Cyprus. Both these museums would have made interesting additions to the dataset because their collections include a significant portion of Phoenician material. Larnaca especially would have provided an interesting point of comparison with Idalion given the interactions of the two sites during the first millennium BCE (Szyncer 2004). Just as the Carthage museum, perceptions in these remain to be explored in the future.

The updates these museums are subject to in fact echo a nation-wide trend in Cyprus. We already talked at length about the plans for the new national museum, where the Phoenician material will be presented as part of the Iron Age displays but in integration with the rest of the collections as part of

a contextual display (Pilides 2020, pers. comm.). We also saw that the Limassol museum should be subject to renovations.

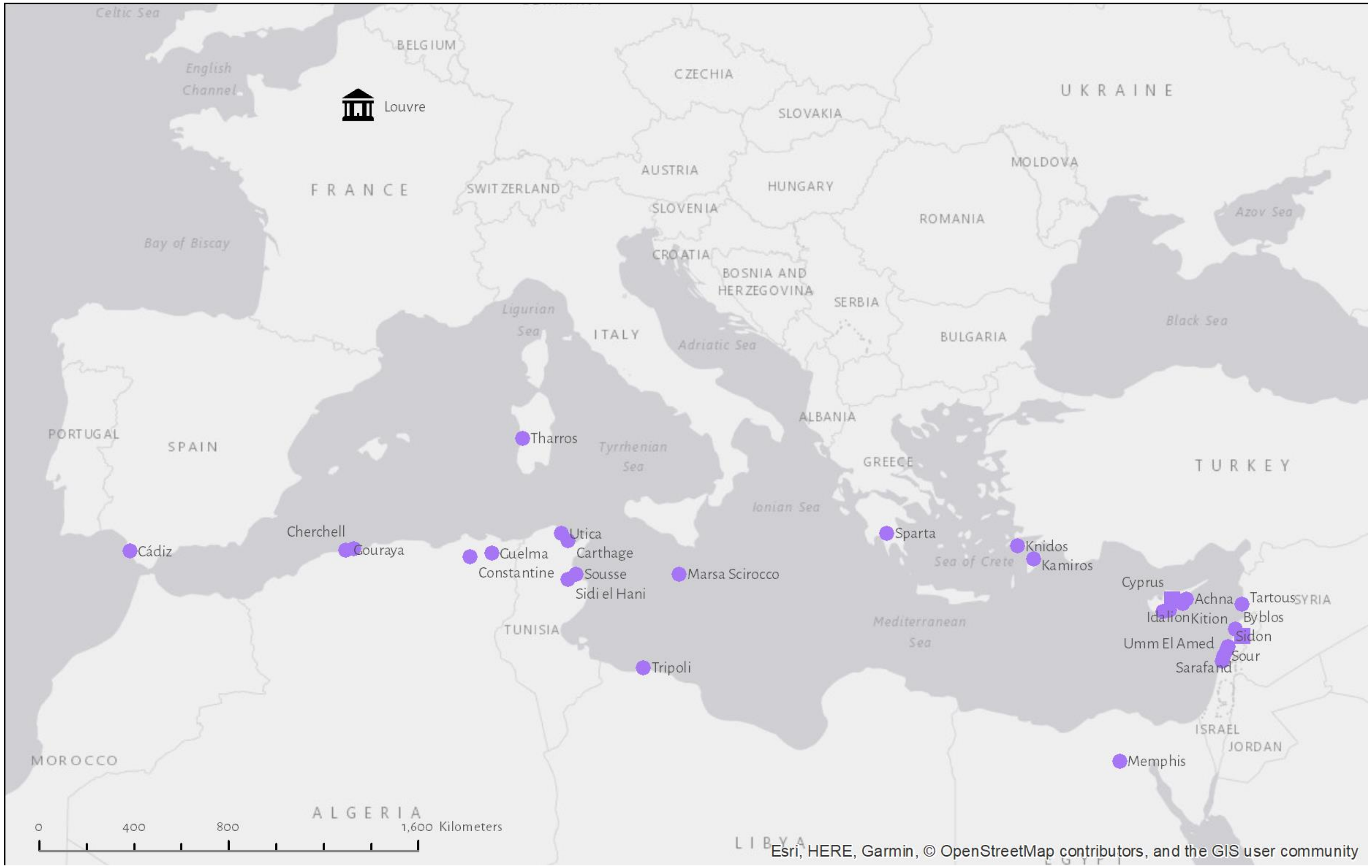
This trend is not unique to Cyprus. Throughout my research, I saw museums with plans for partial or full renovation: from the planned Punic gallery in Malta, the labelling update at the Louvre, the jewellery yet to be exhibited in the Bardo Museum, to the gradual updating of the Museo Salinas of Palermo, among others. This shows that museums are permanently reinventing themselves and their interpretation, even in cases where some displays have been recently renovated. The process of exhibiting permanent collections is slow and long-term, in perpetual movement. Most visitors experience only a snapshot of it in a moment in time, but just as their contexts, these collections are seldom static (Falk and Dierking 2016, 29).

Moreover, many of the museums, if they did not have plans for updating their Phoenician displays, had recently made changes to these. For example, the Beirut National Museum inaugurated a new floor in 2016 focusing on funerary practises and featuring its impressive collection of anthropoid sarcophagi. The Phoenician gallery at the National Museum of Malta was redone in 2014, and the current displays in the Cypriot galleries at the British Museum date from 2012 (the Phoenician showcase, on the other hand, goes back to 2006). The Museo Arqueológico Nacional was entirely renovated between 2008 and 2013, and the Museo de Málaga quickly followed this trend with a reopening in 2016 with an entirely new interpretation of the Phoenician collections (Palomares Samper 2019, pers. comm.). The Museo Lilibeo of Marsala was also renovated in 2017, integrating more contextual materials from excavations (Griffo 2019, pers. comm.).

The fact that so many of the museums included in this study have either recently (in the last 5-10 years) updated the displays of their Phoenician collections or plan on doing so in the next few years, in addition to all the museums which were partially or completely renovating during the time this thesis was produced is significant. It shows that there is an intention to rethink this material which goes beyond specific countries or regions and touches the Mediterranean as a whole as well as international museums. This thesis has demonstrated that museums are aware of the stakes linked to defining Phoenicianity. When this is not directly reflected in their displays, discussions with curators have brought it to light. The pattern of change underlines it. However, we also saw that these changes are tightly bound to the context of each museum. As such, there is no right or wrong way to display Phoenician collections, as a central universal narrative cannot be envisioned. Each museum remains dependent on both its collection and its context, just as each collection is dependent on its museum and its context. This is why the display of Phoenician collections will never be uniform from one museum to another, no matter how closely related the artefacts are. What remains to be seen is how these exhibitions will evolve and adapt in a world of constantly shifting perceptions.

Appendices

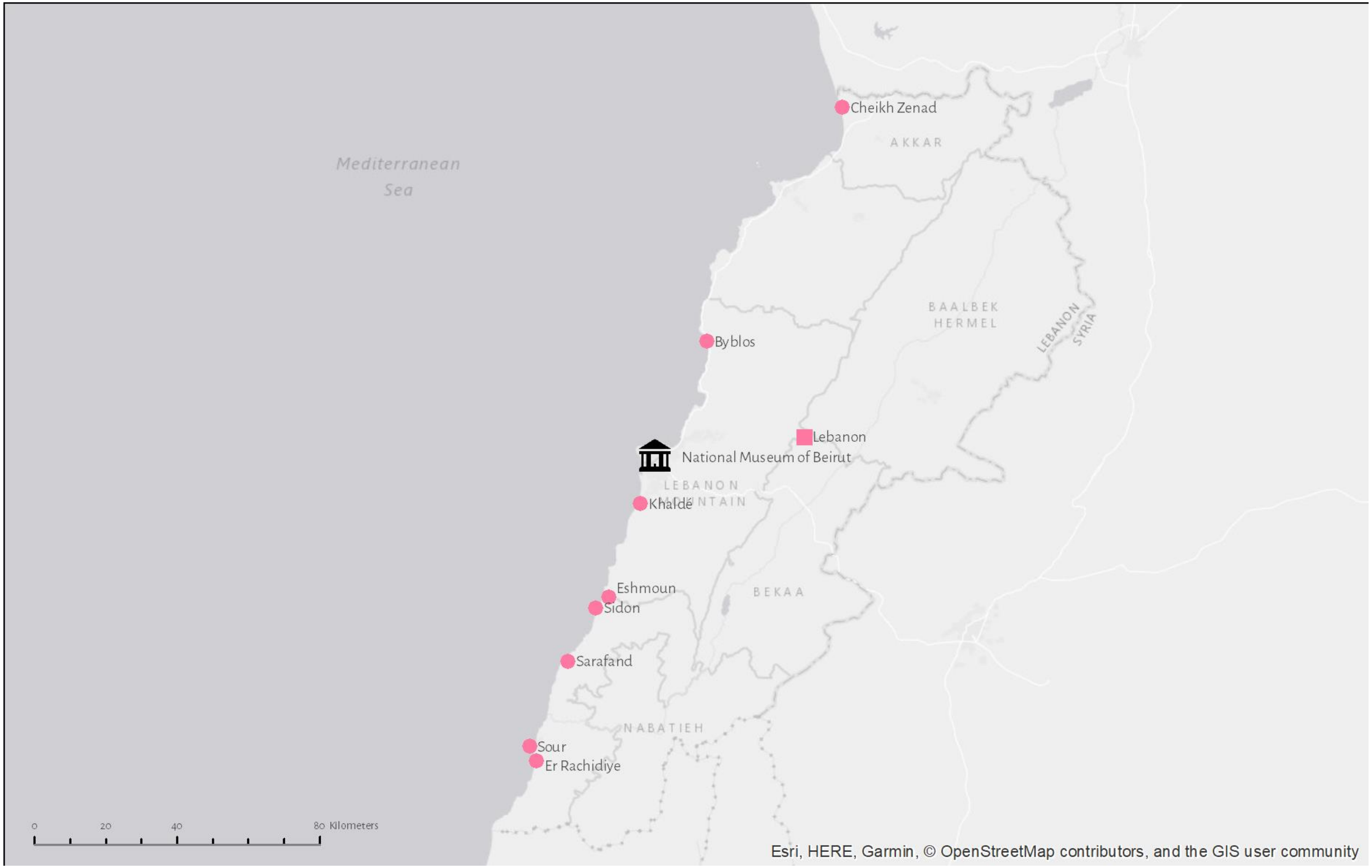
Appendix 1 | Maps of the provenance of the Phoenician collections by museum



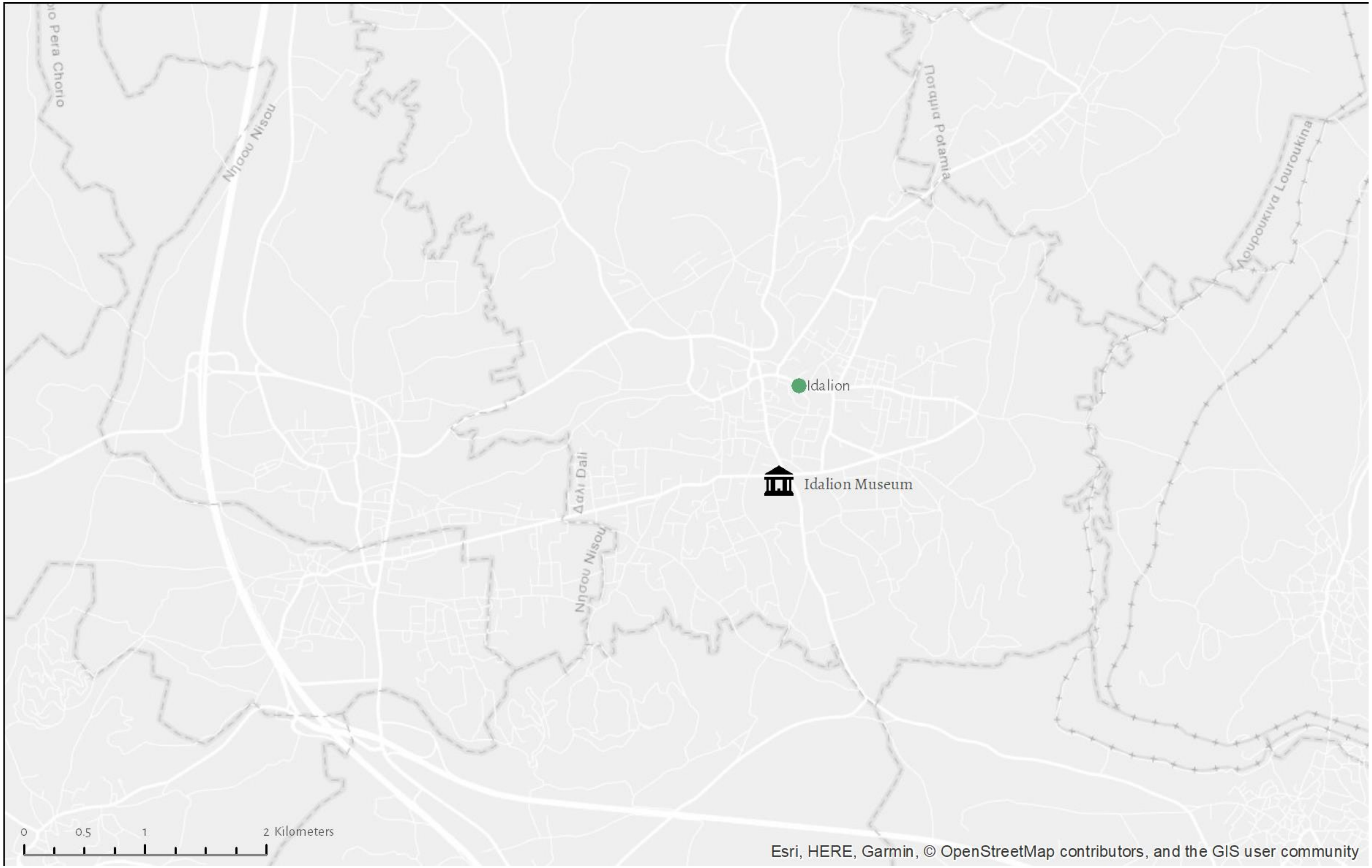
Map 1: Louvre



Map 2: AUB Museum



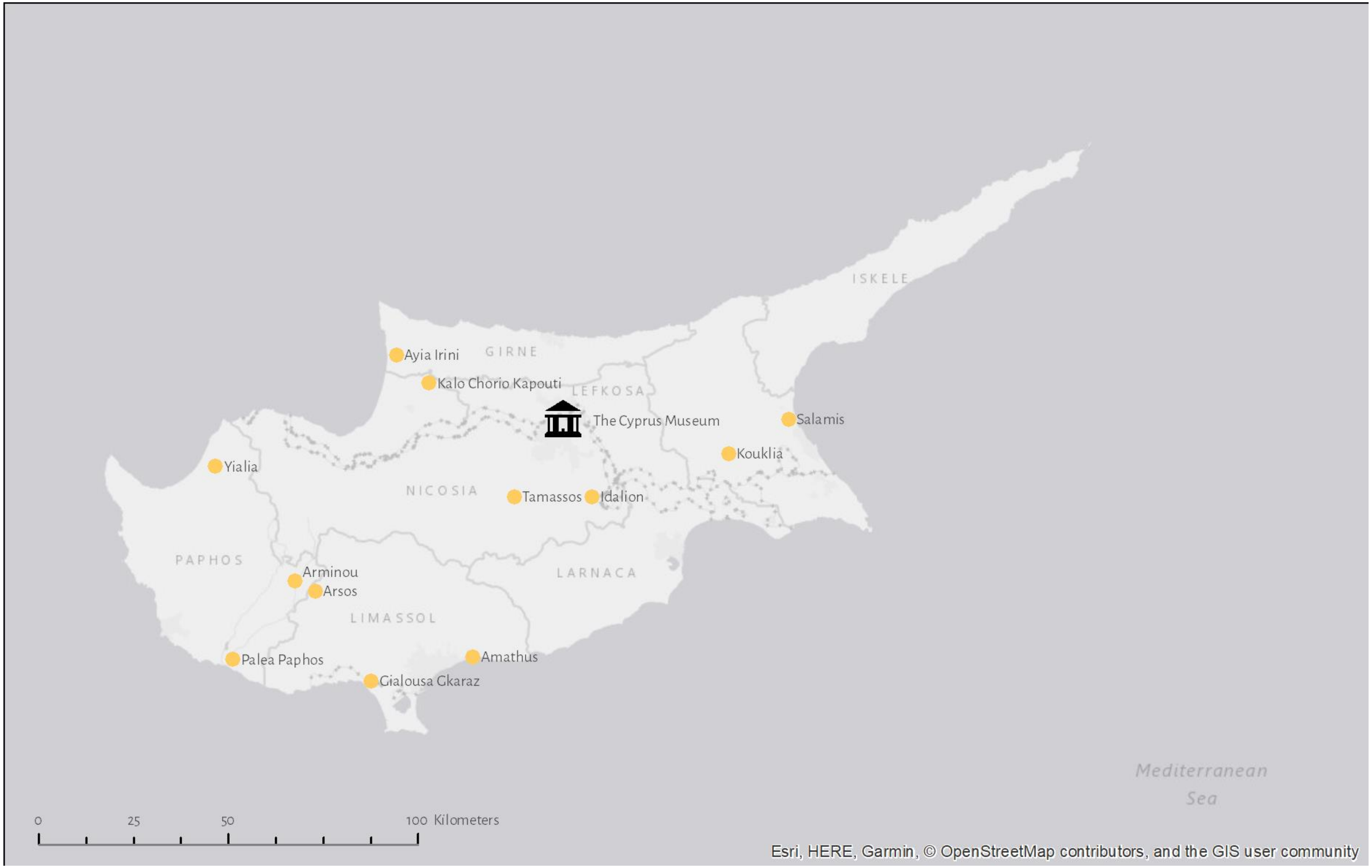
Map 3: Beirut National Museum



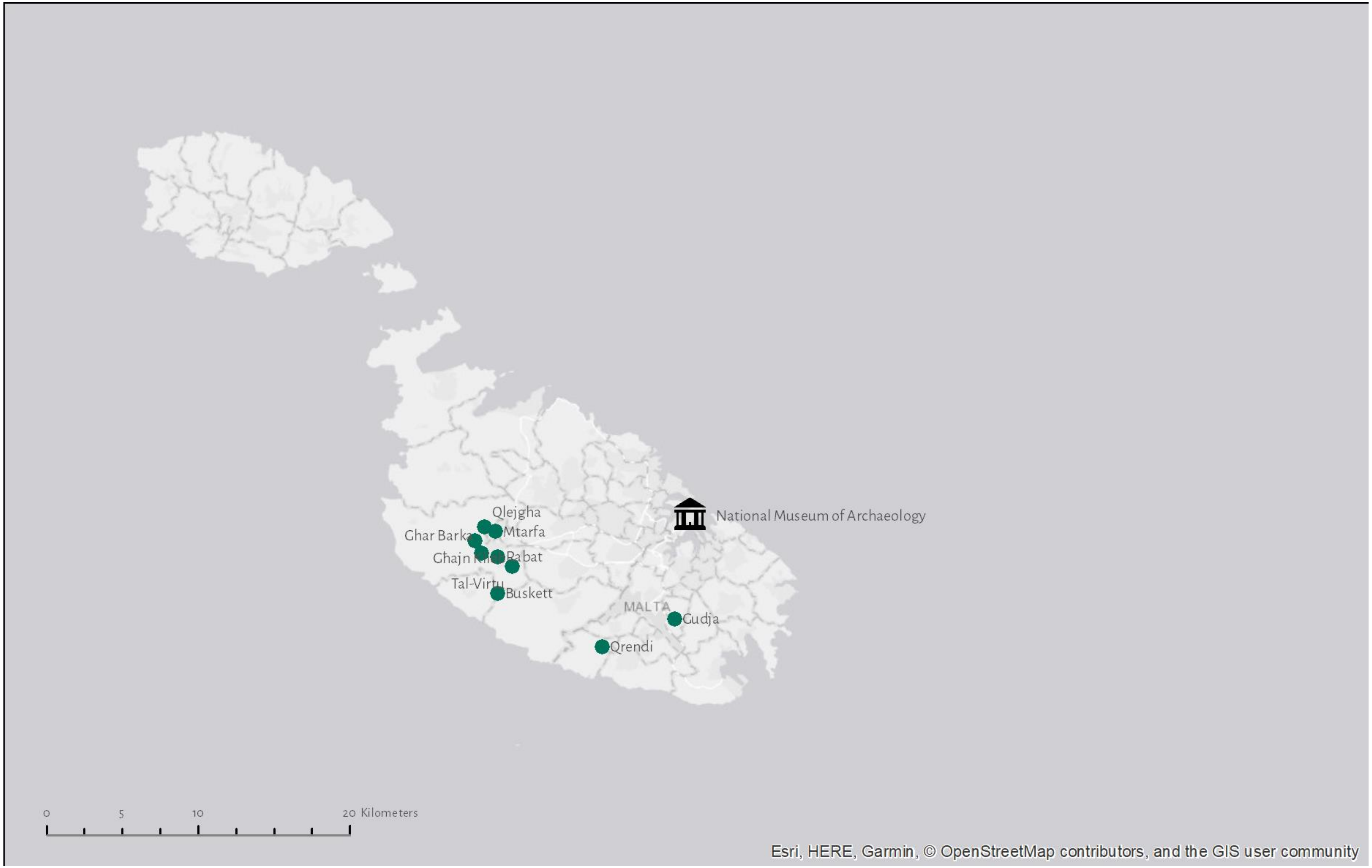
Map 4: Idalion Museum



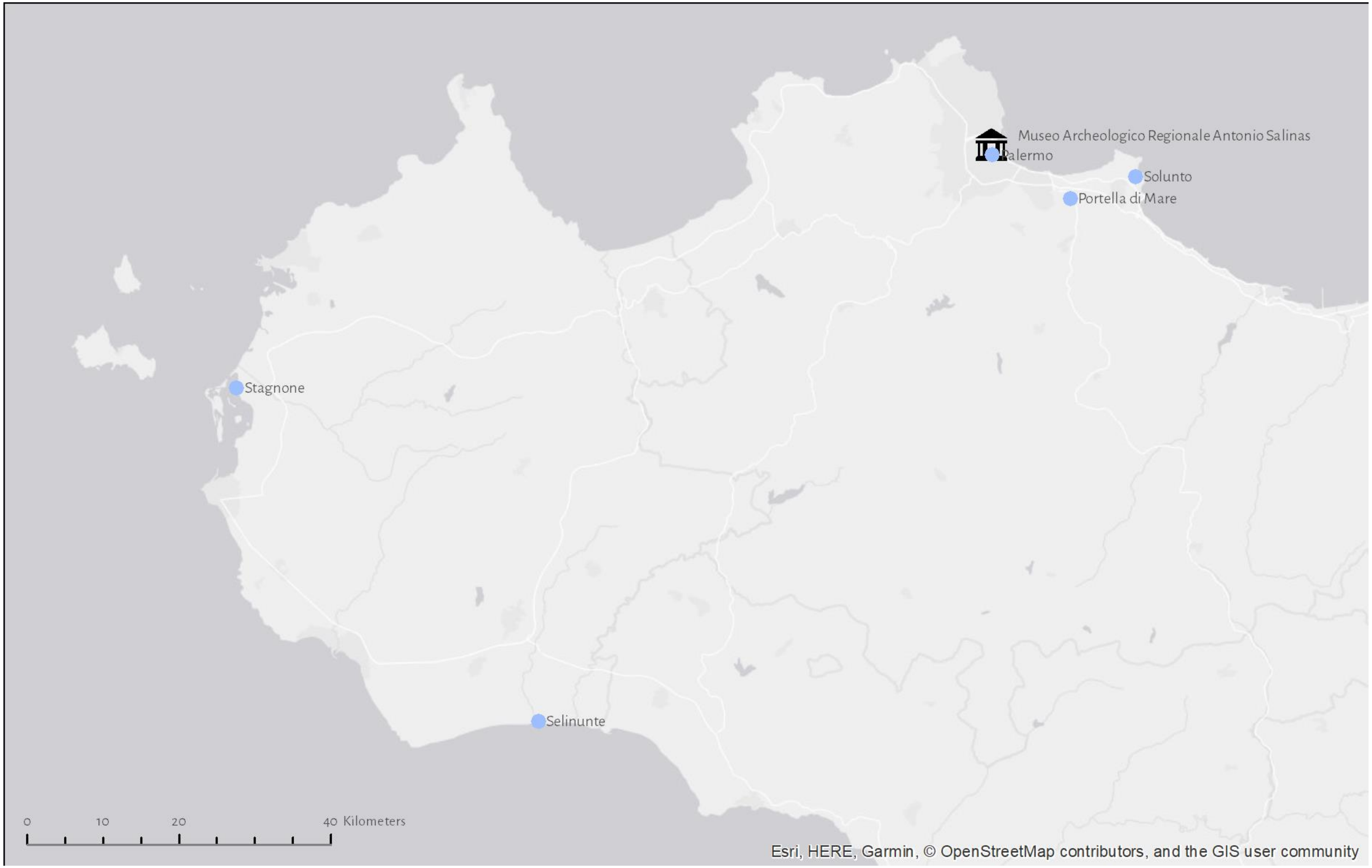
Map 5: Limassol Museum



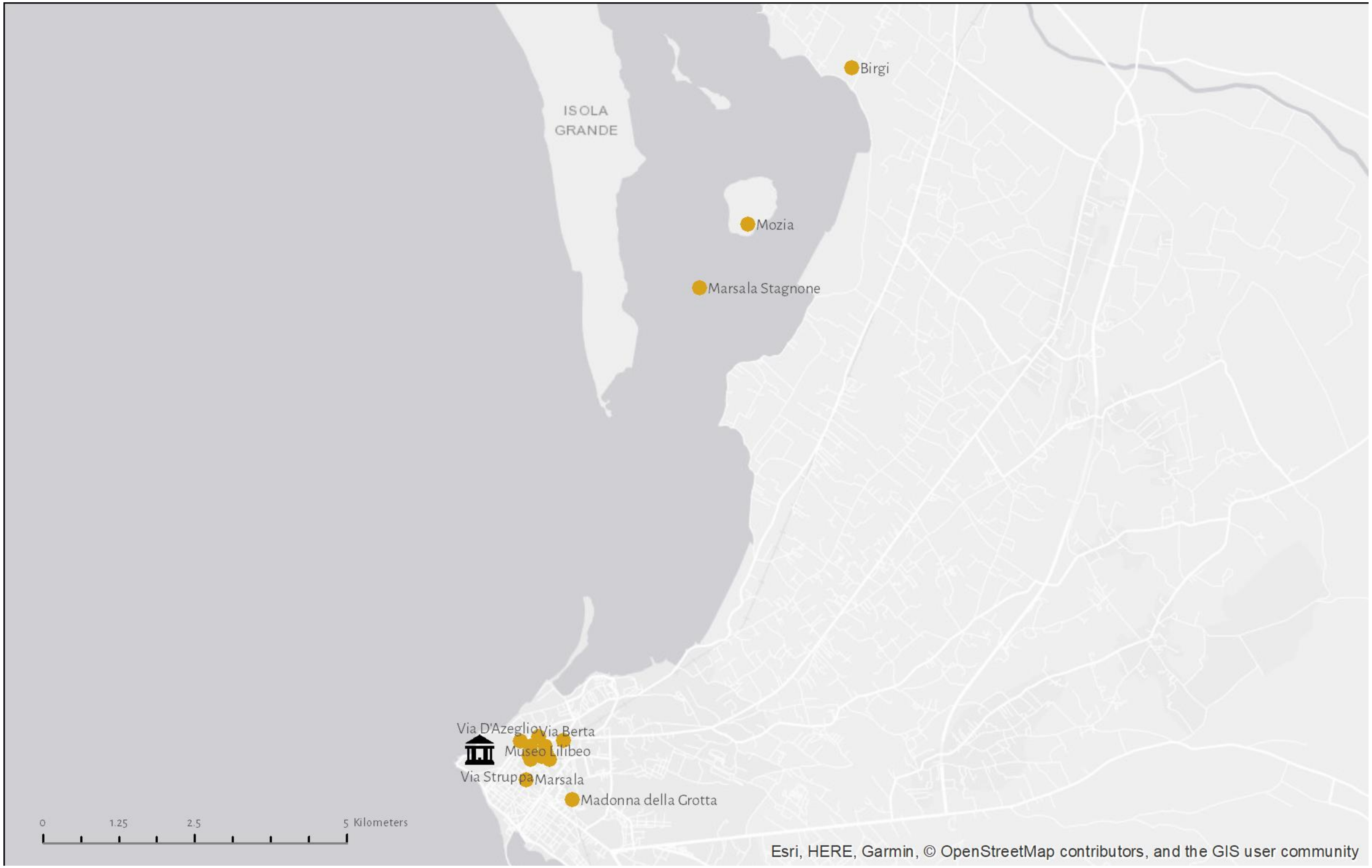
Map 6: Cyprus Museum



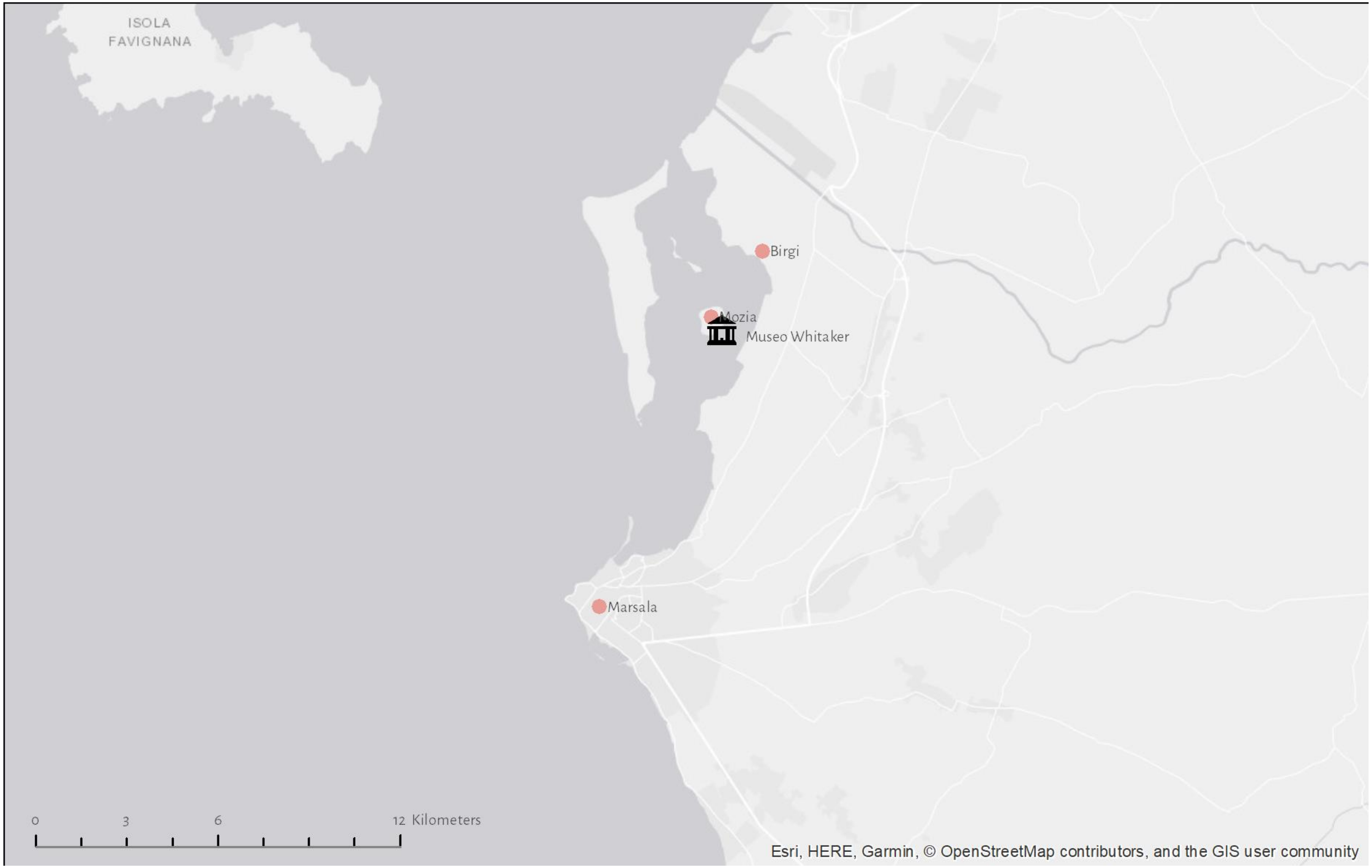
Map 7: National Museum of Archaeology, Valetta



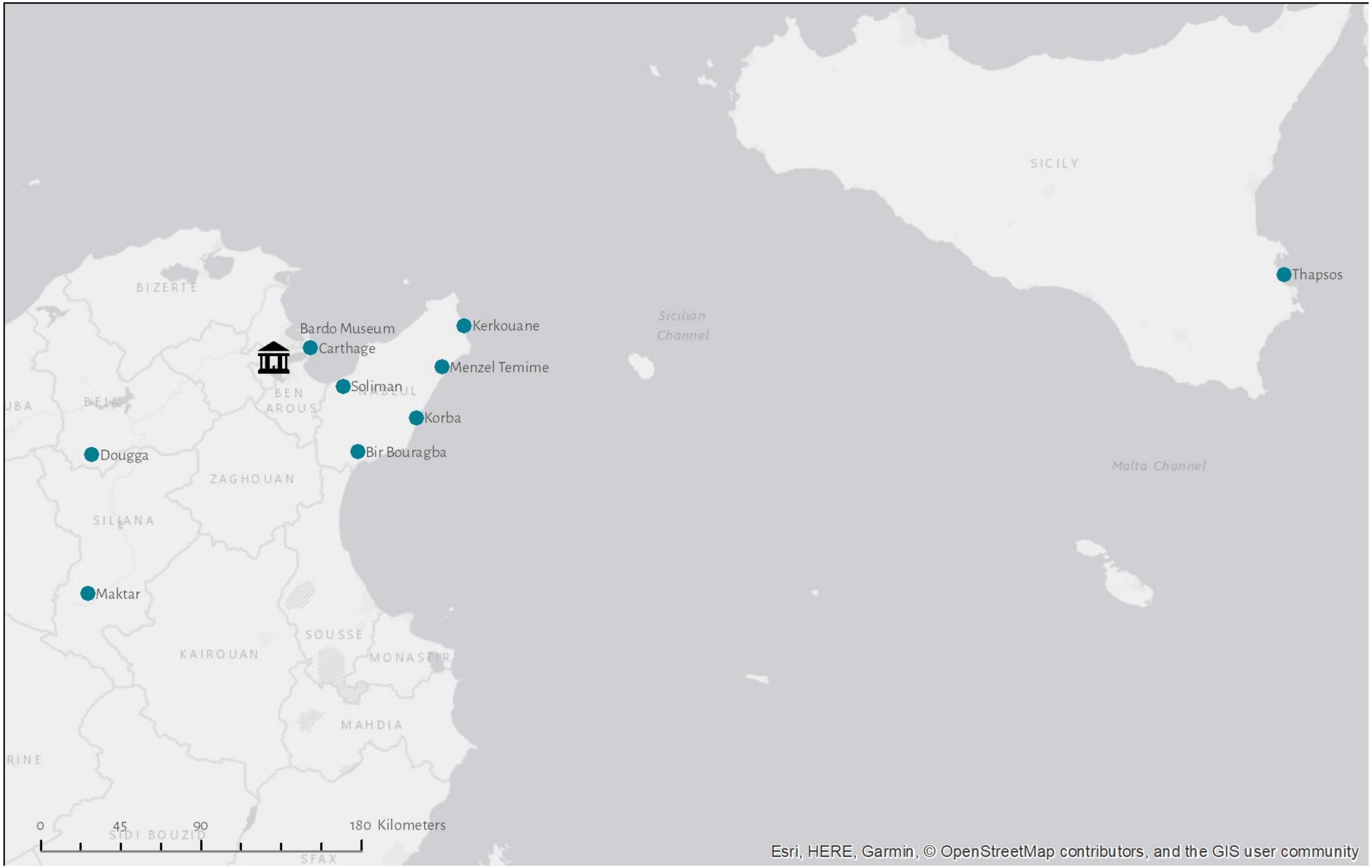
Map 8: Museo Salinas Palermo



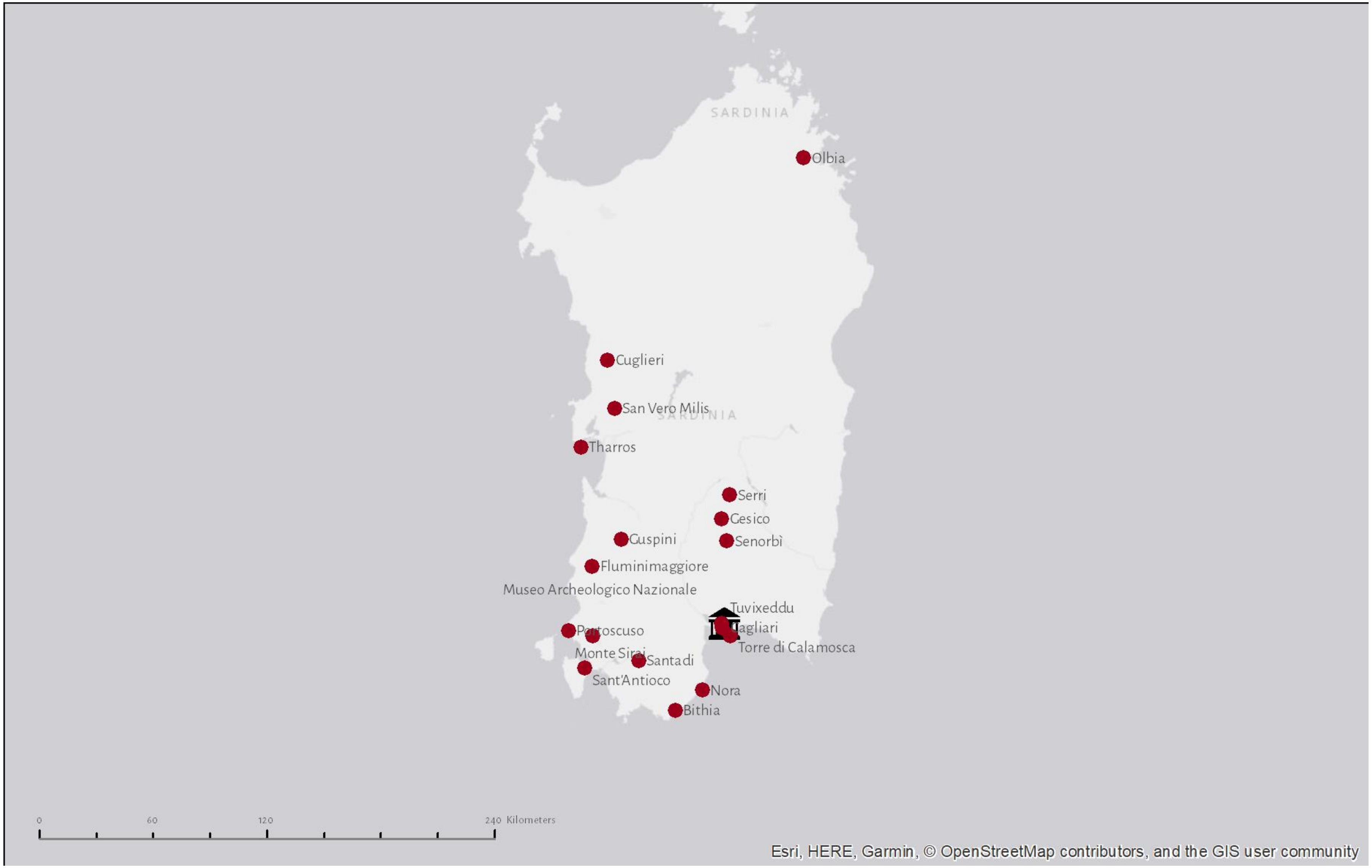
Map 9: Museo Lilibeo Marsala



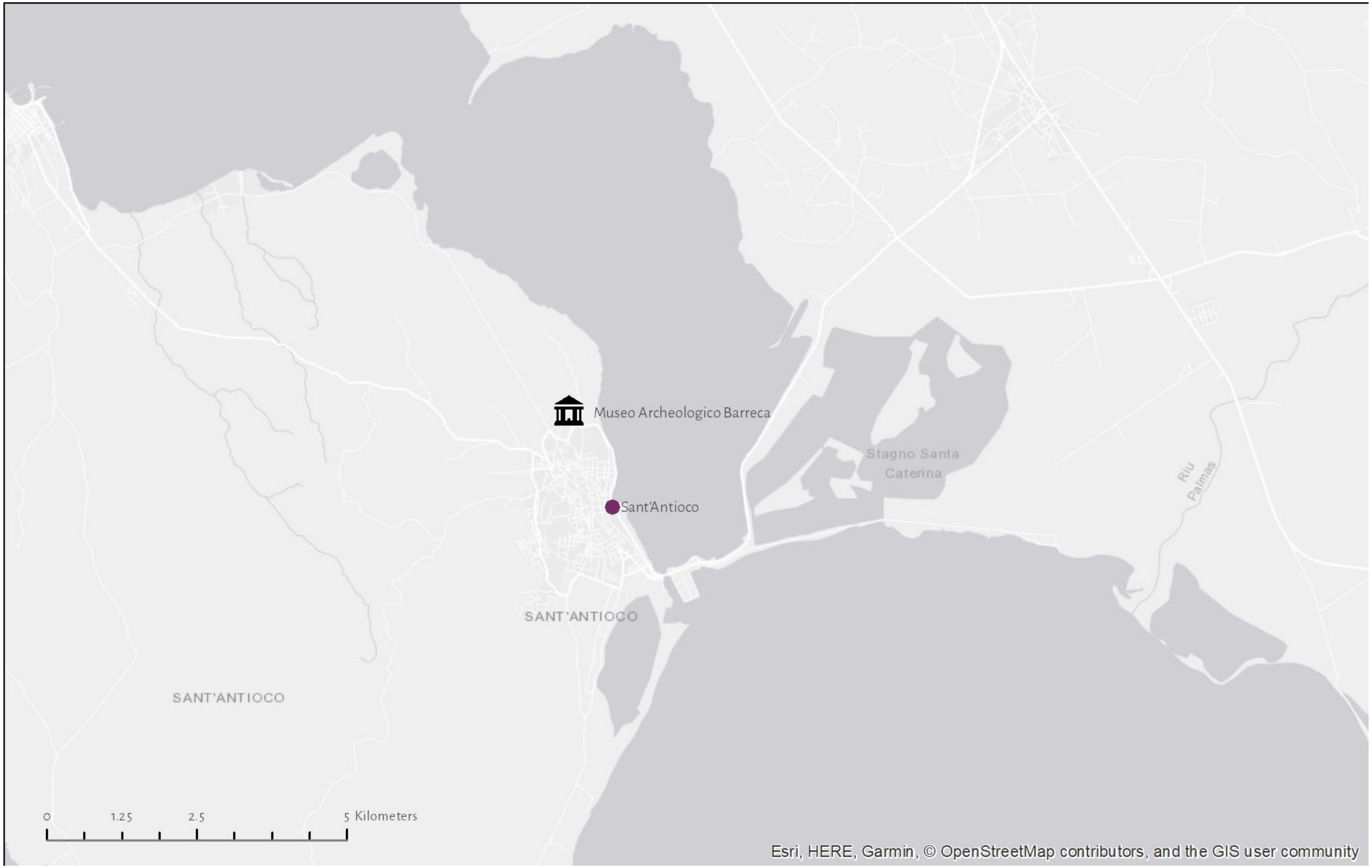
Map 10: Museo Whitaker Mozia



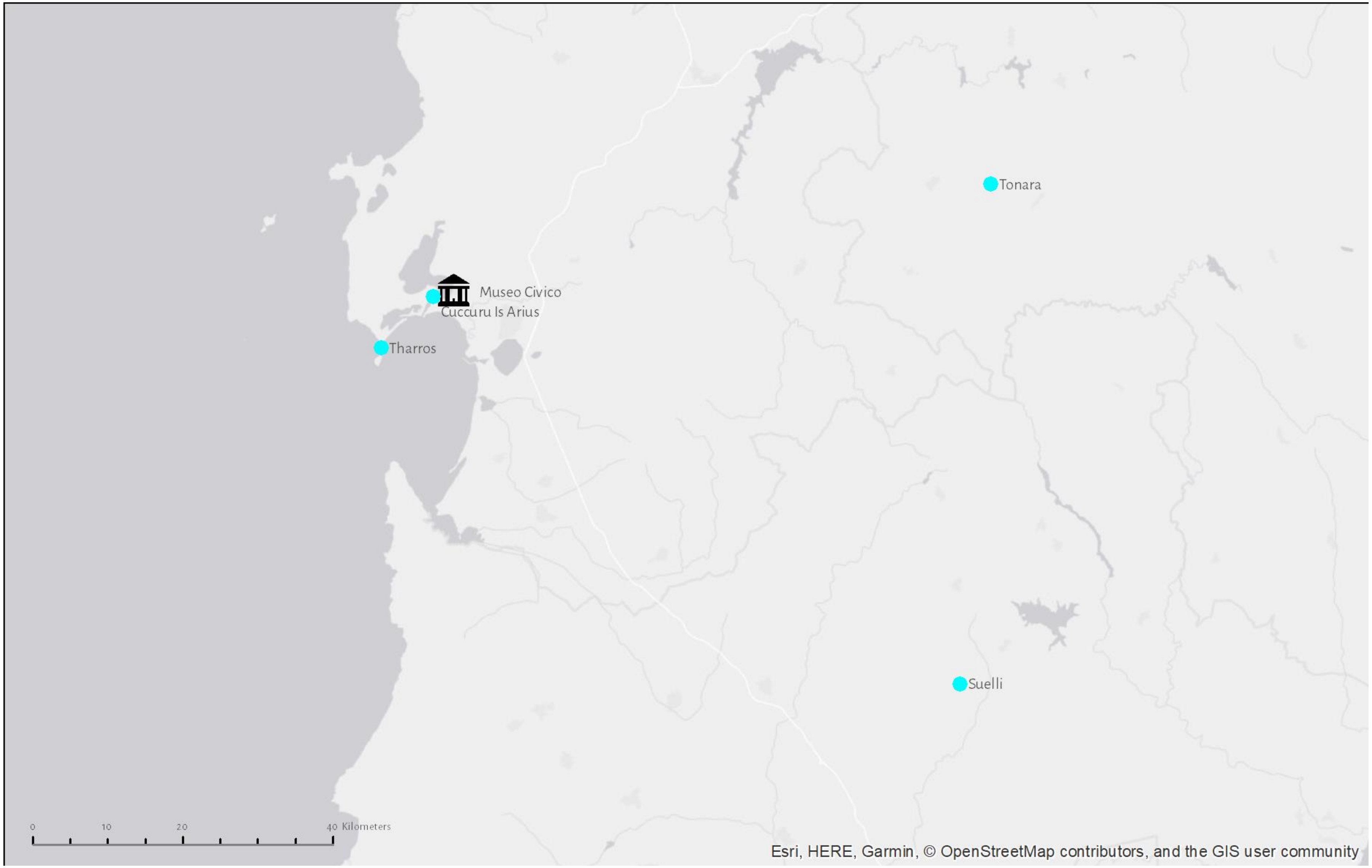
Map 11: Bardo Museum



Map 12: Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Cagliari



Map 13: Museo Barreca Sant'Antioco



Map 14: Museo Marongiu Cabras



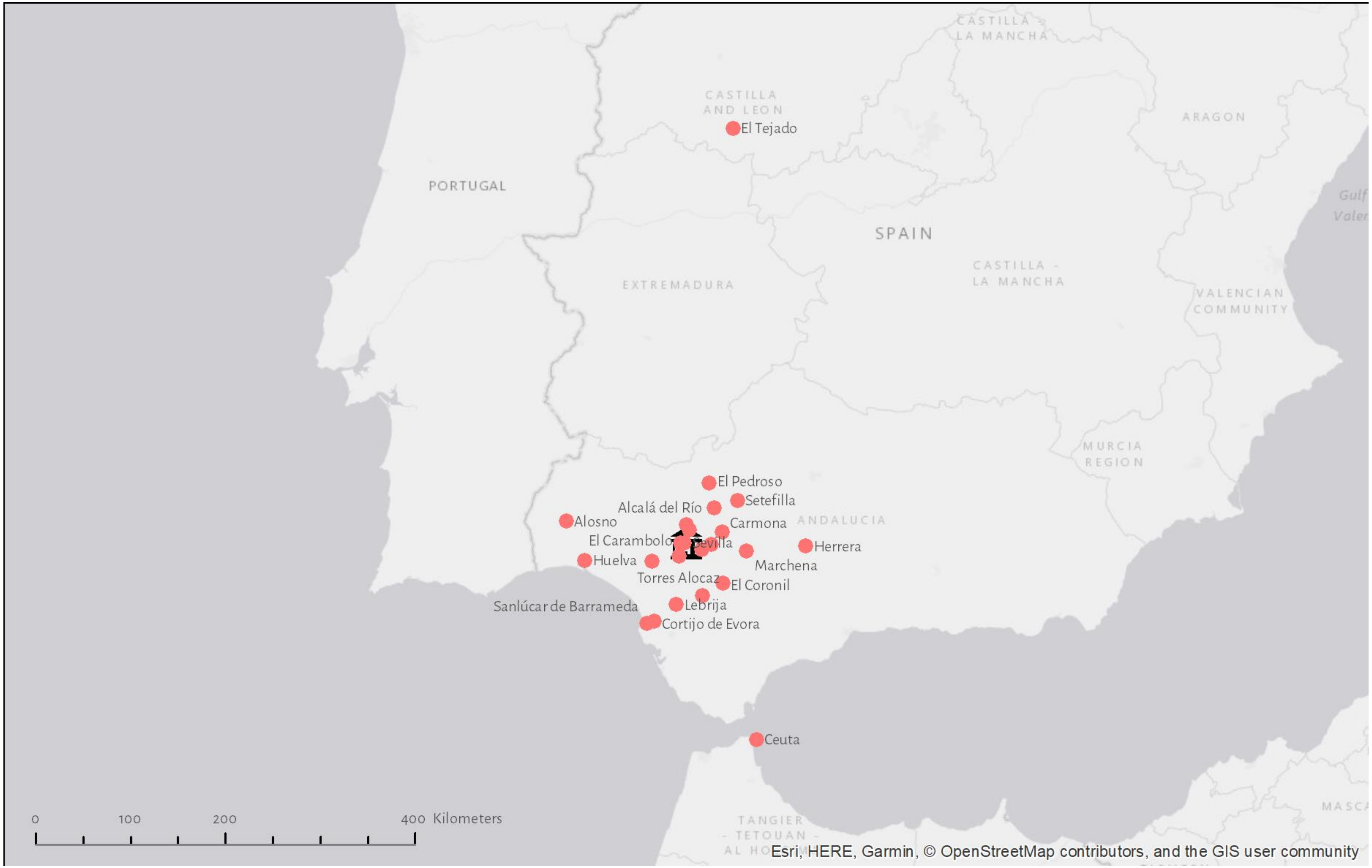
Map 15: Museo Arqueológico Nacional



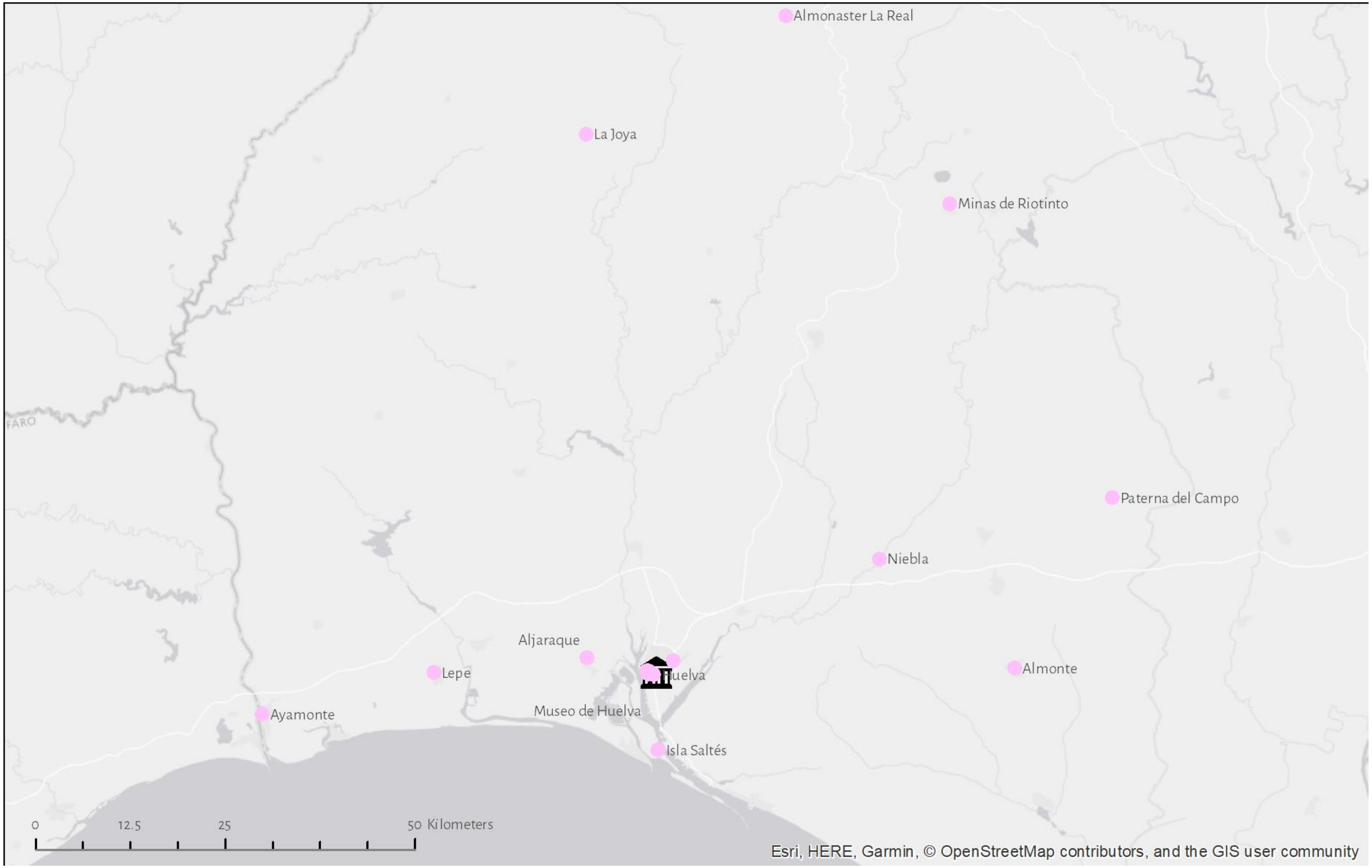
Map 16: Museo de Málaga



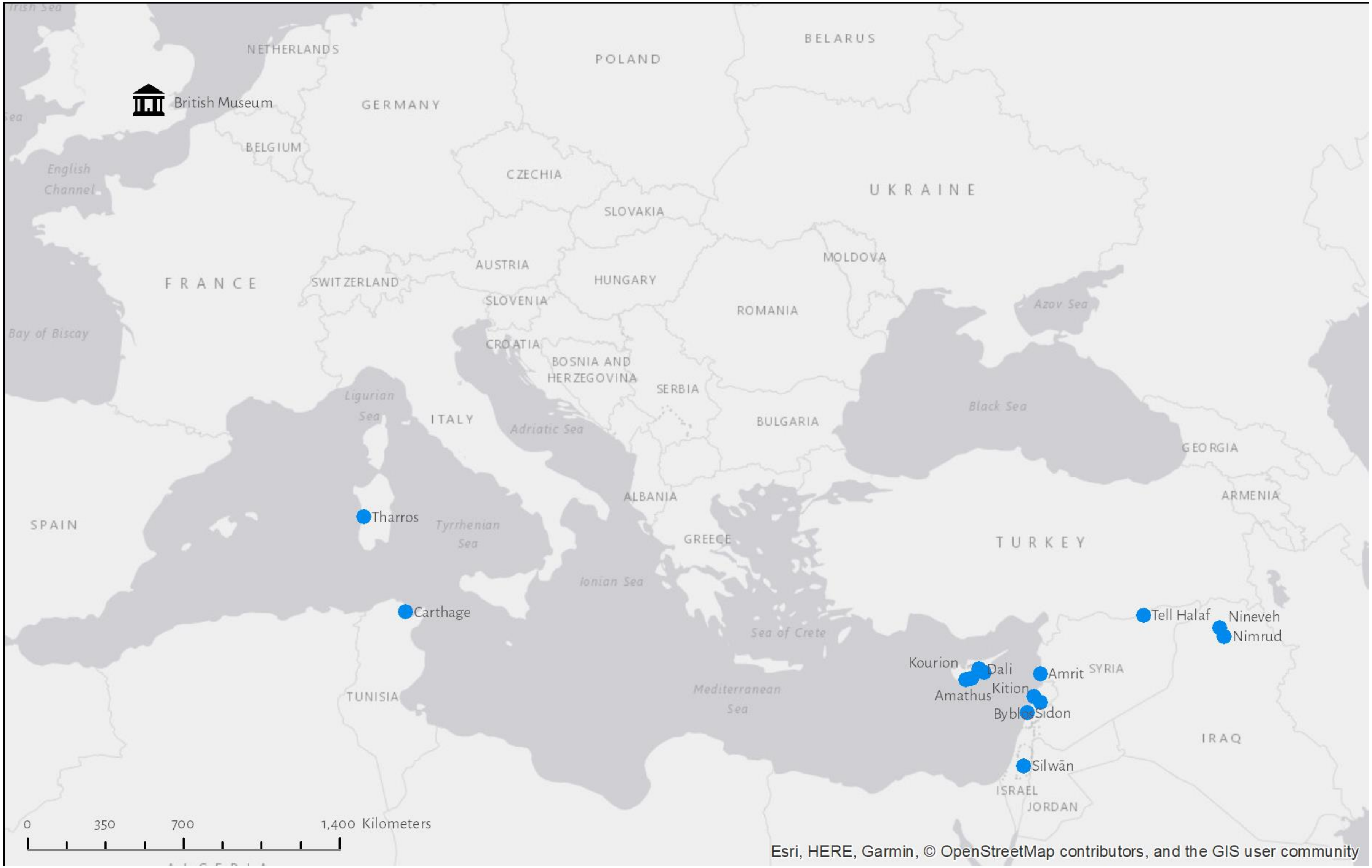
Map 17: Museo de Cádiz



Map 18: Museo Arqueológico de Sevilla

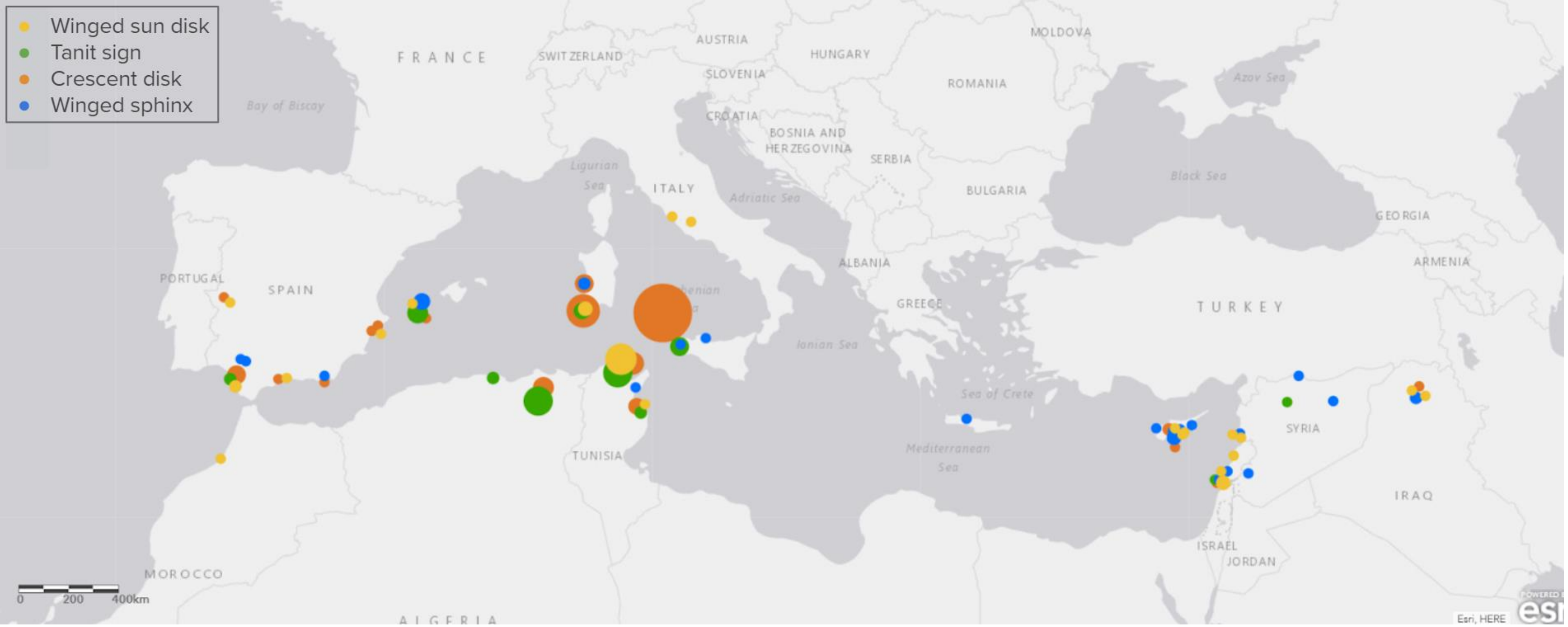


Map 19: Museo de Huelva



Map 20: British Museum

Appendix 2 | Iconography map



Map 21: Iconographical signs by provenance and concentration.

See Appendix 6 for corresponding data sheet.

Appendix 3 | Summary charts

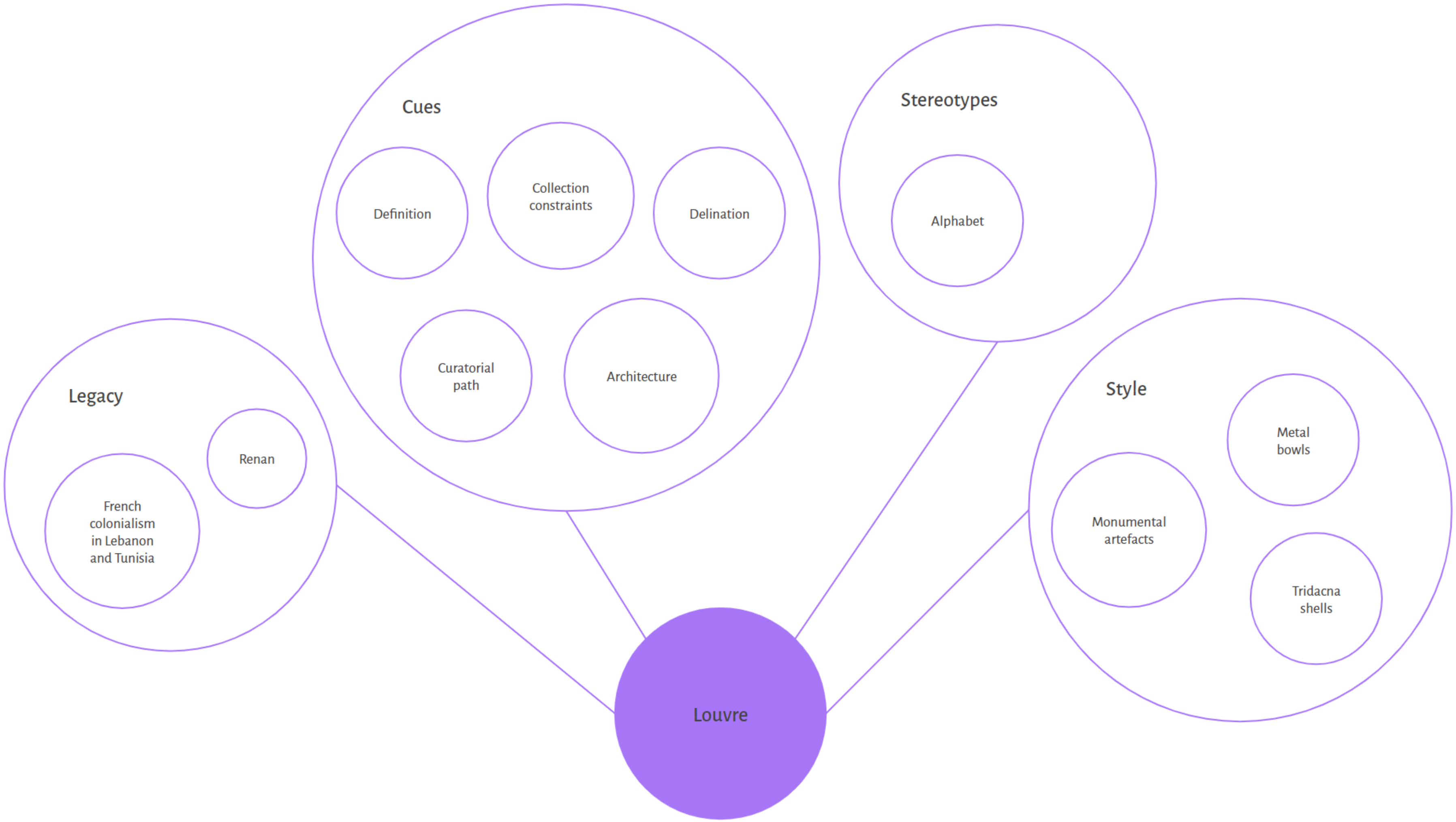


Figure 96: Summary chart of the Louvre.

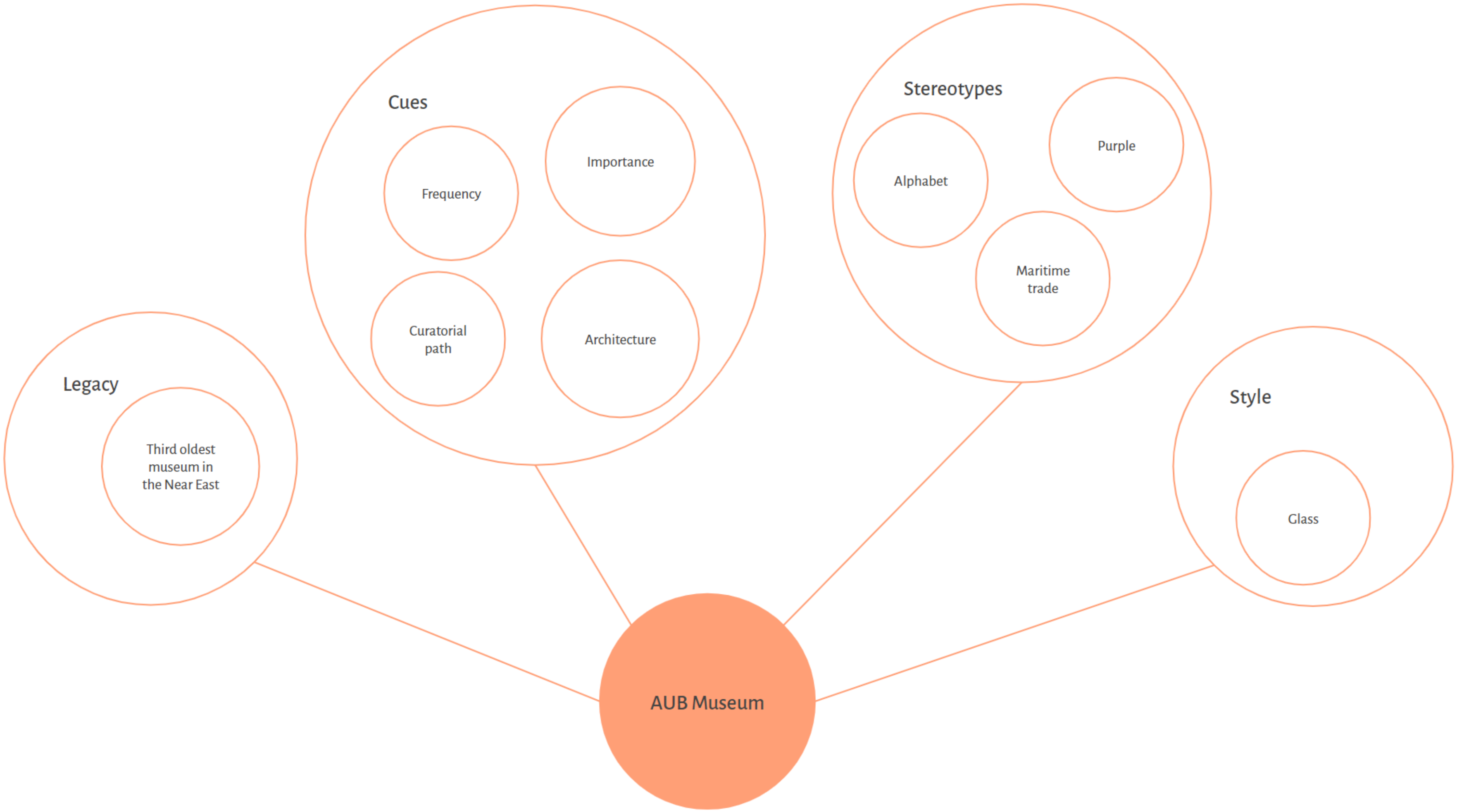


Figure 97: Summary chart of the AUB Museum.

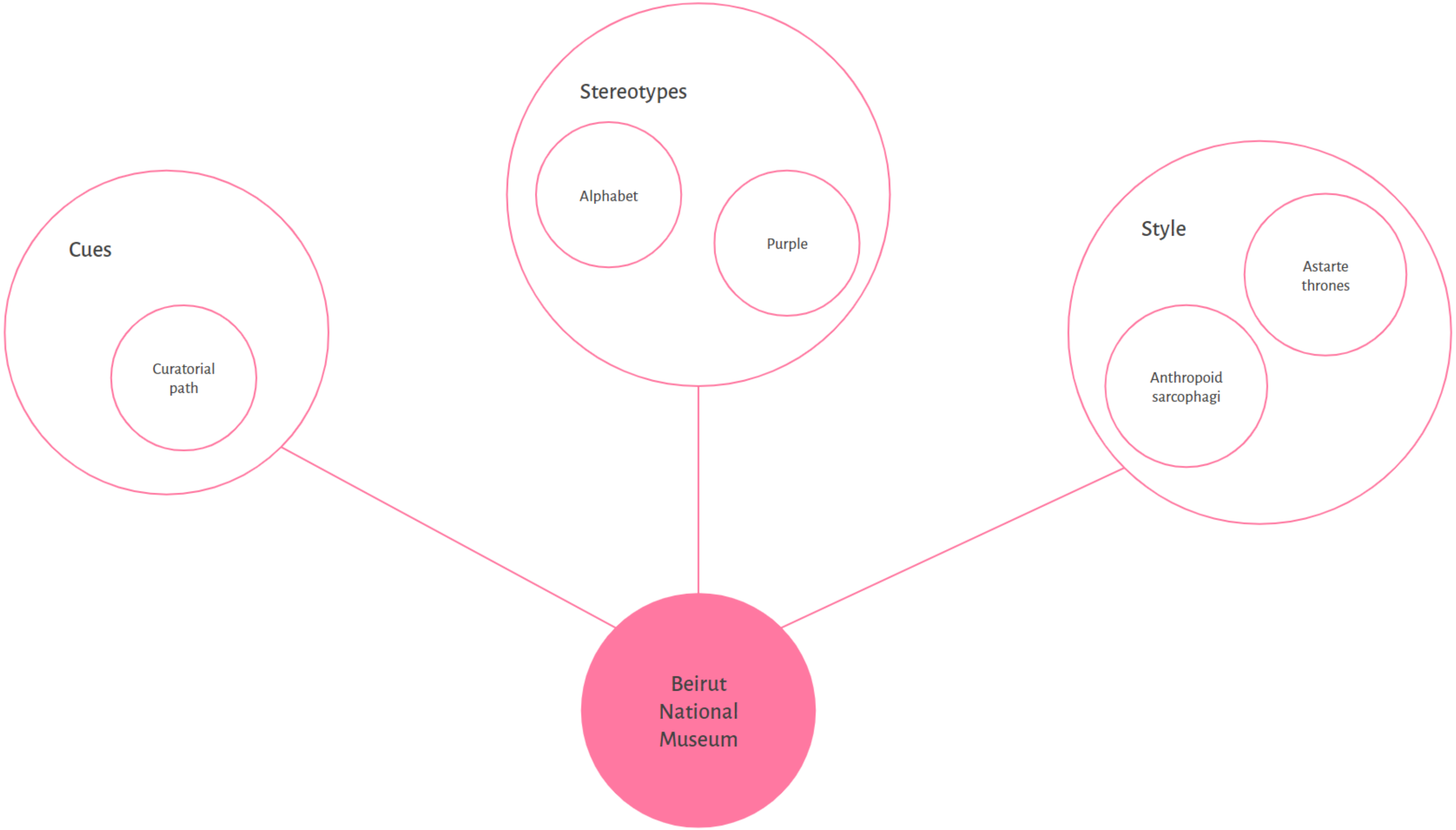


Figure 98: Summary chart of the Beirut National Museum.

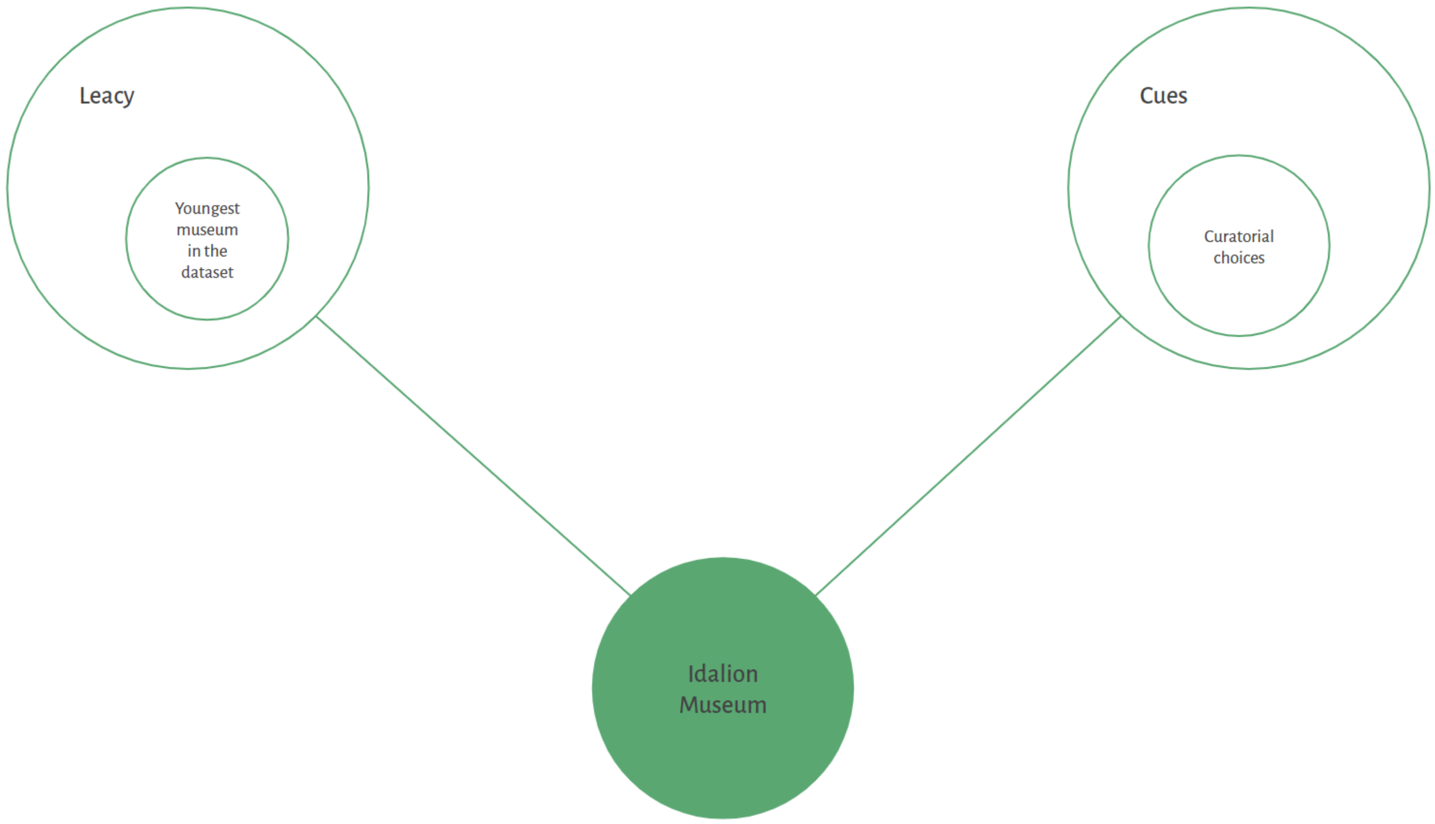


Figure 99: Summary chart of the Idalion Museum.

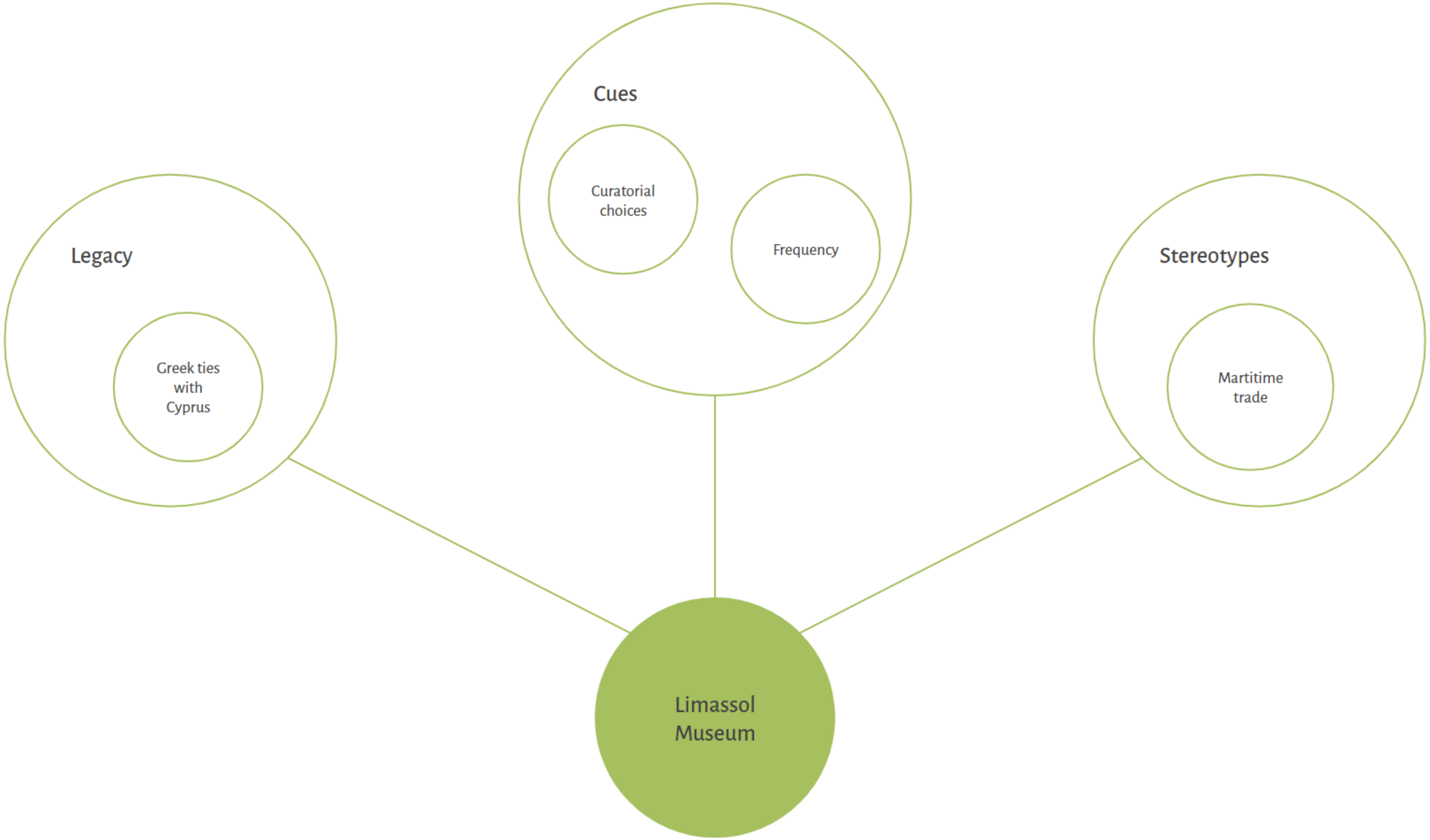


Figure 100: Summary chart of the Limassol Museum.

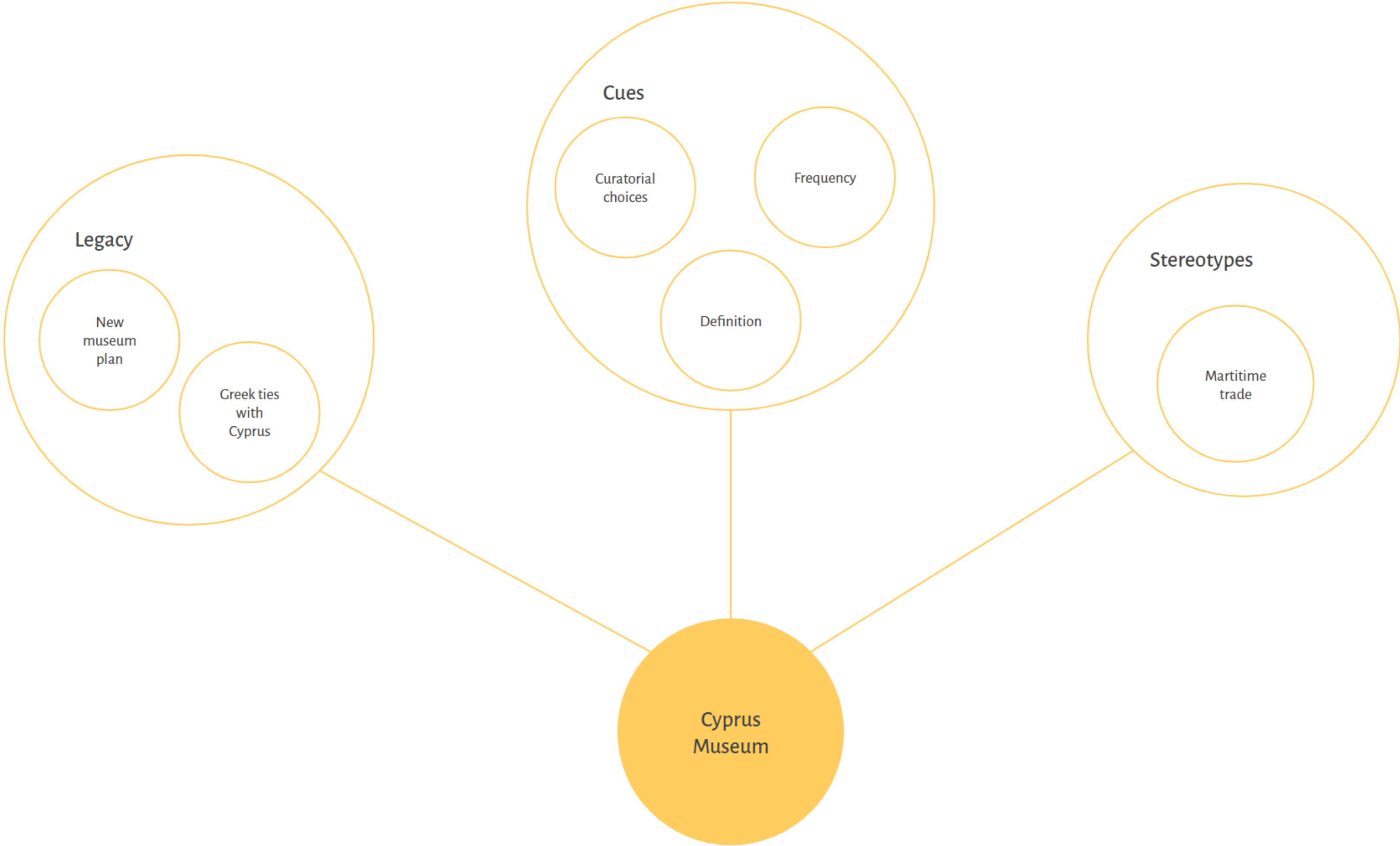


Figure 101: Summary chart of the Cyprus Museum.

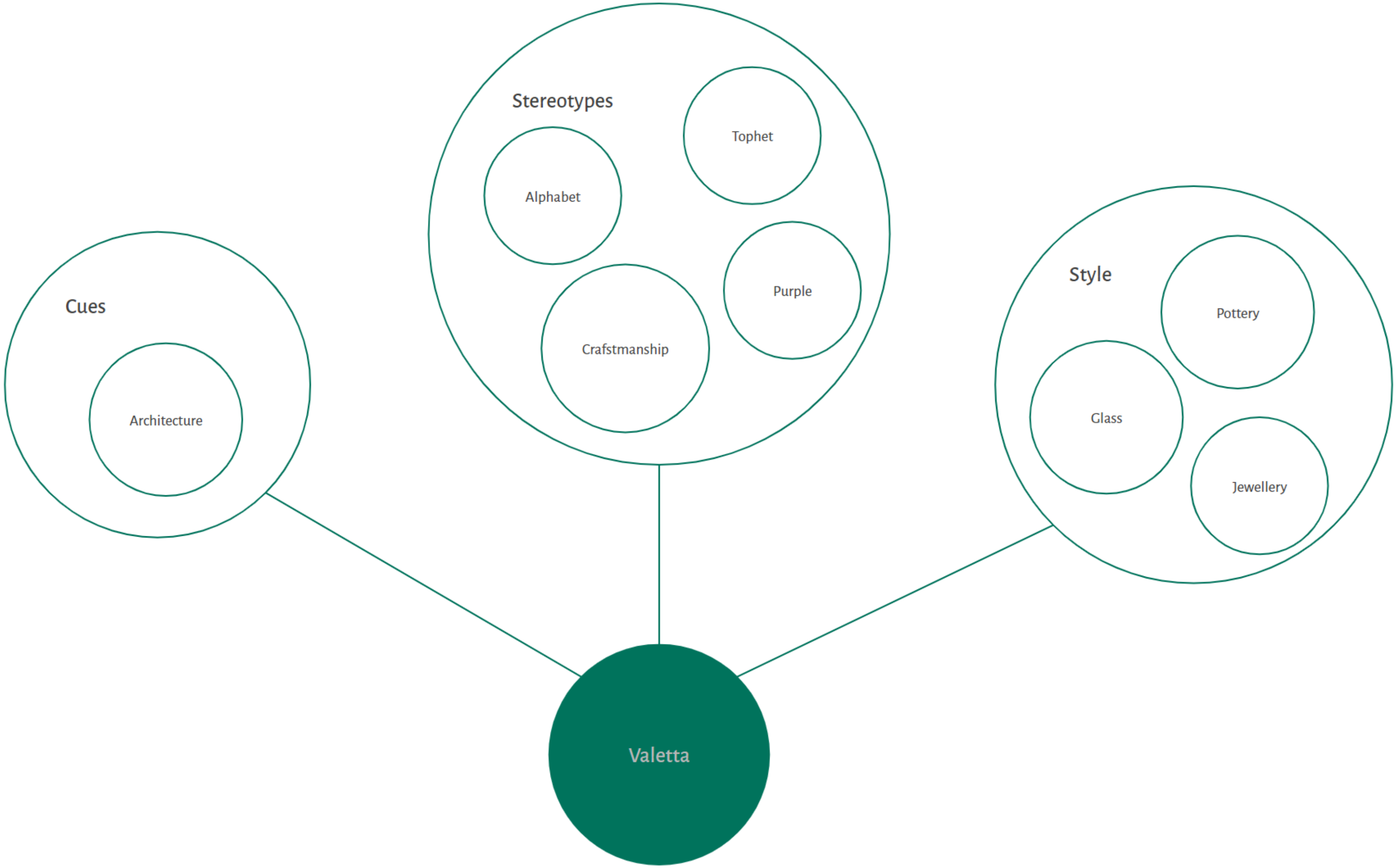


Figure 102: Summary chart of the National Museum of Archaeology of Malta.

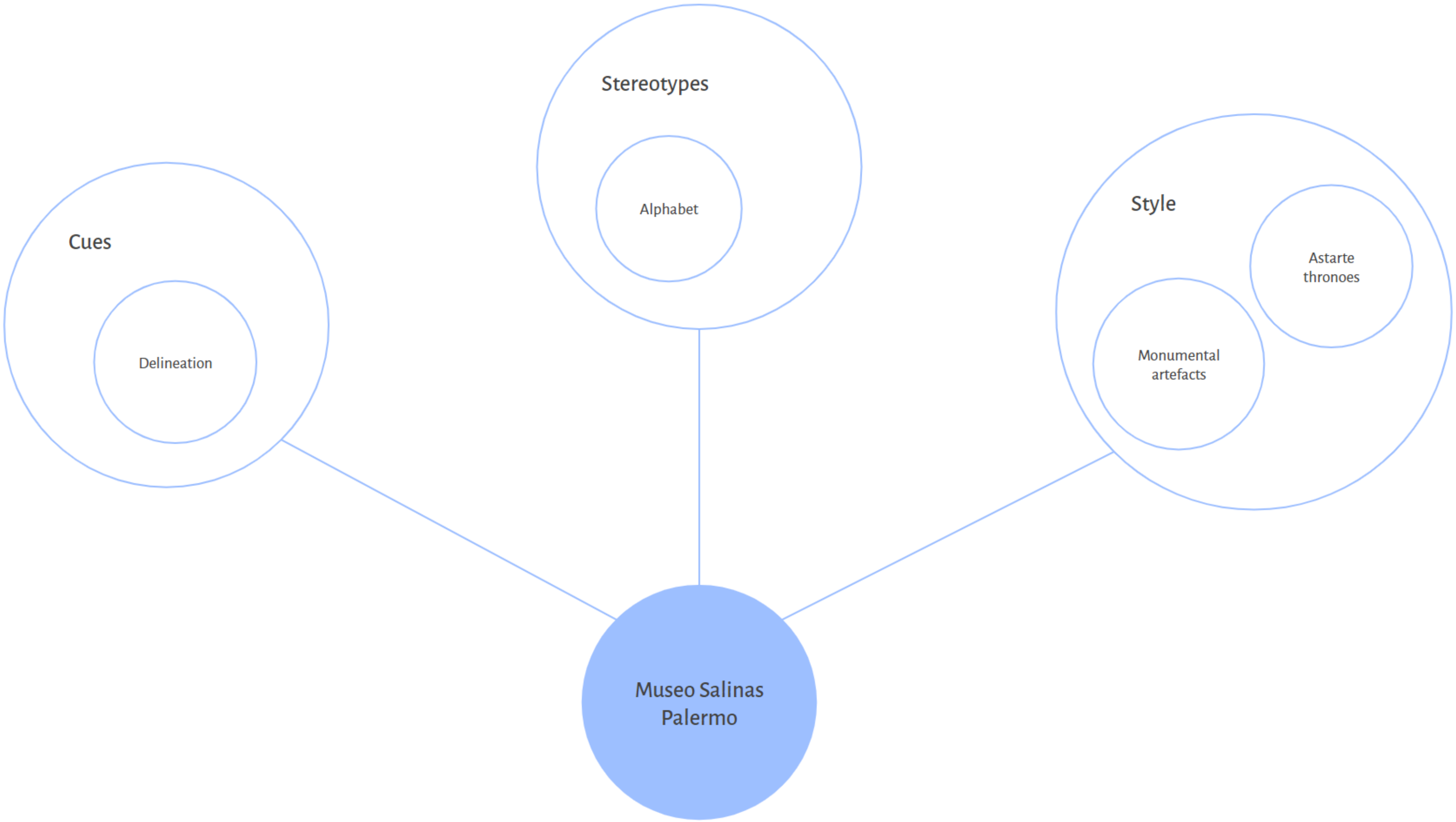


Figure 103: Summary chart of the Museo Salinas.

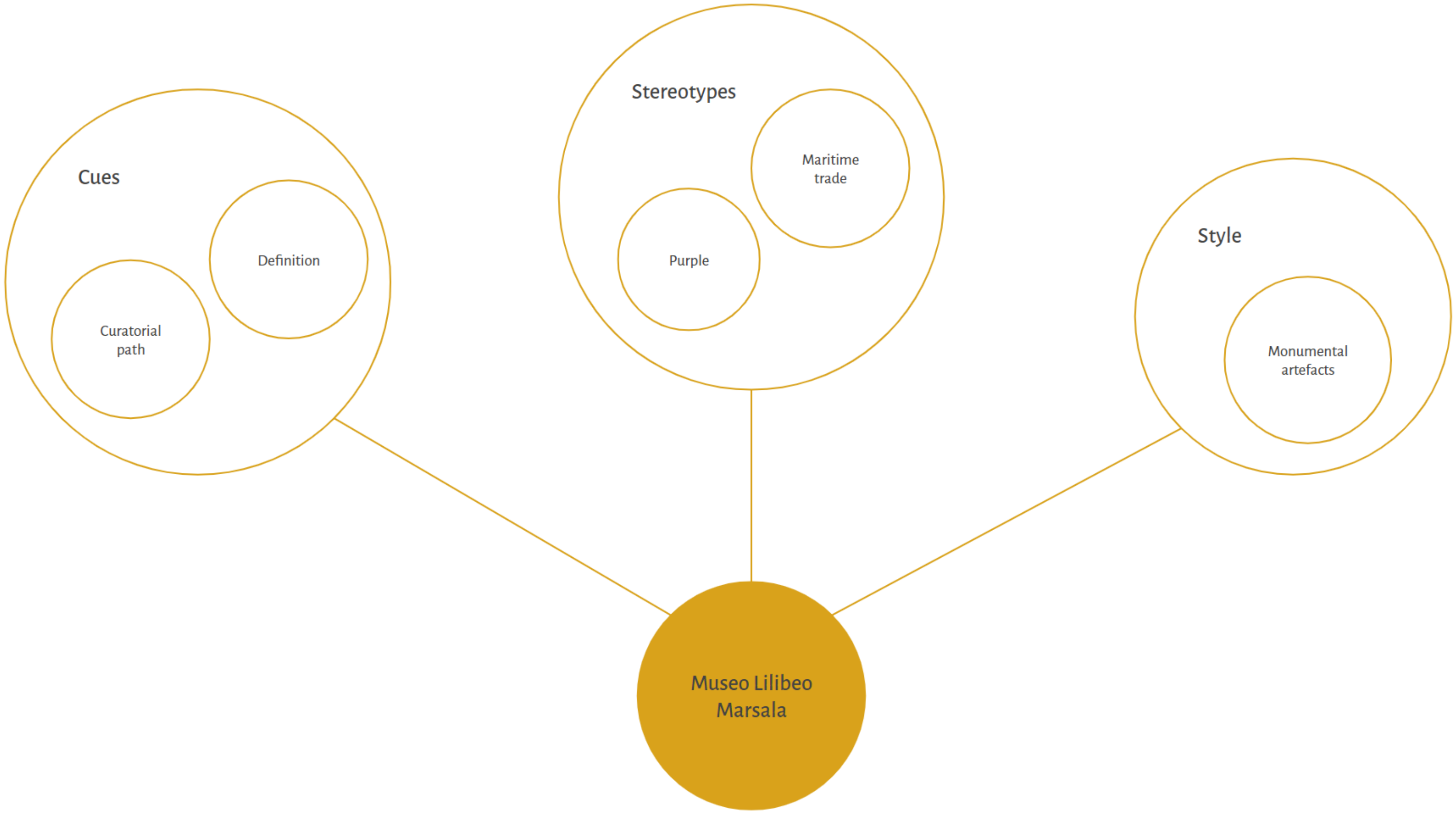


Figure 104: Summary chart of the Museo Lilibeo.

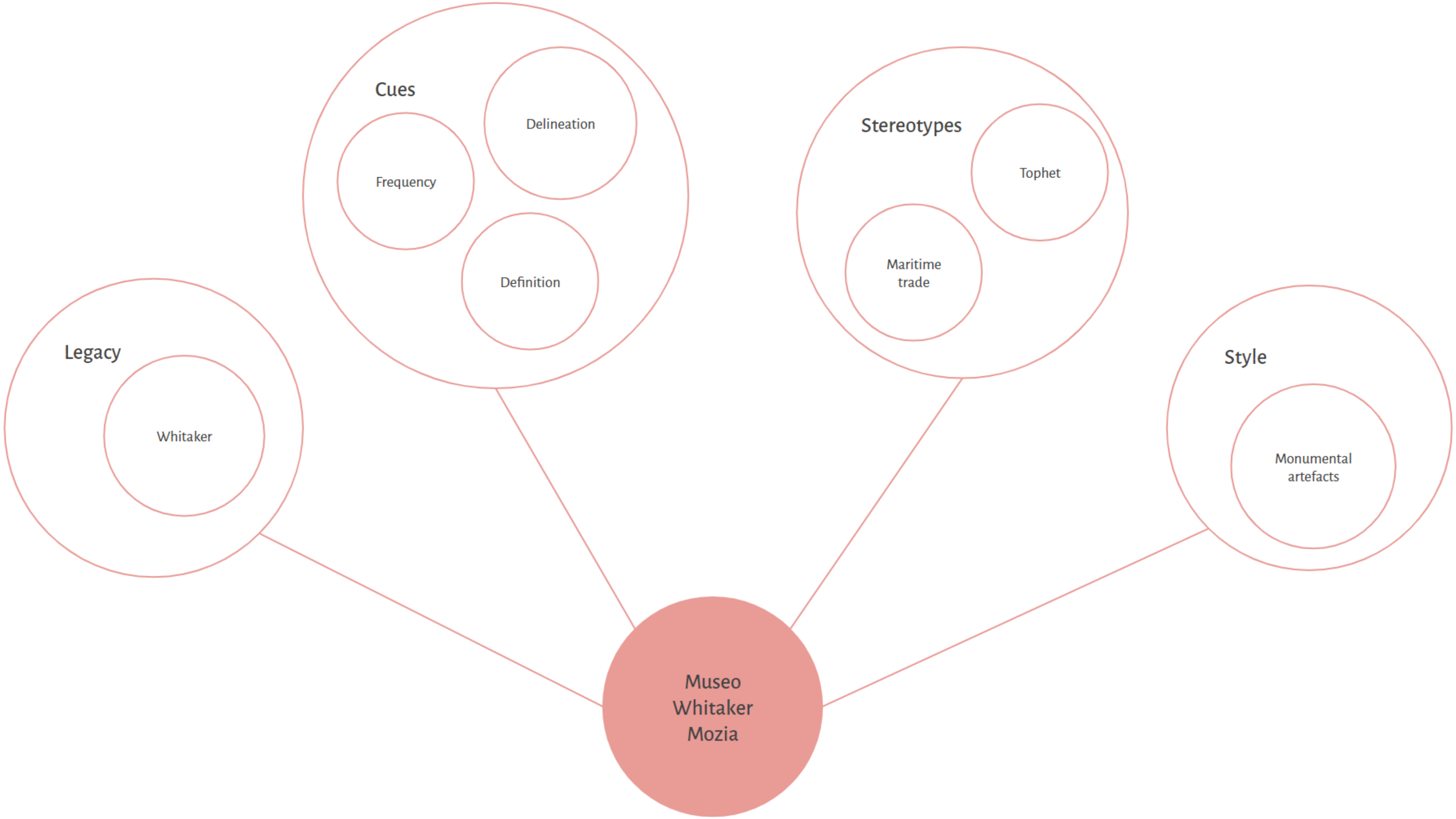


Figure 105: Summary chart of the Museo Whitaker.

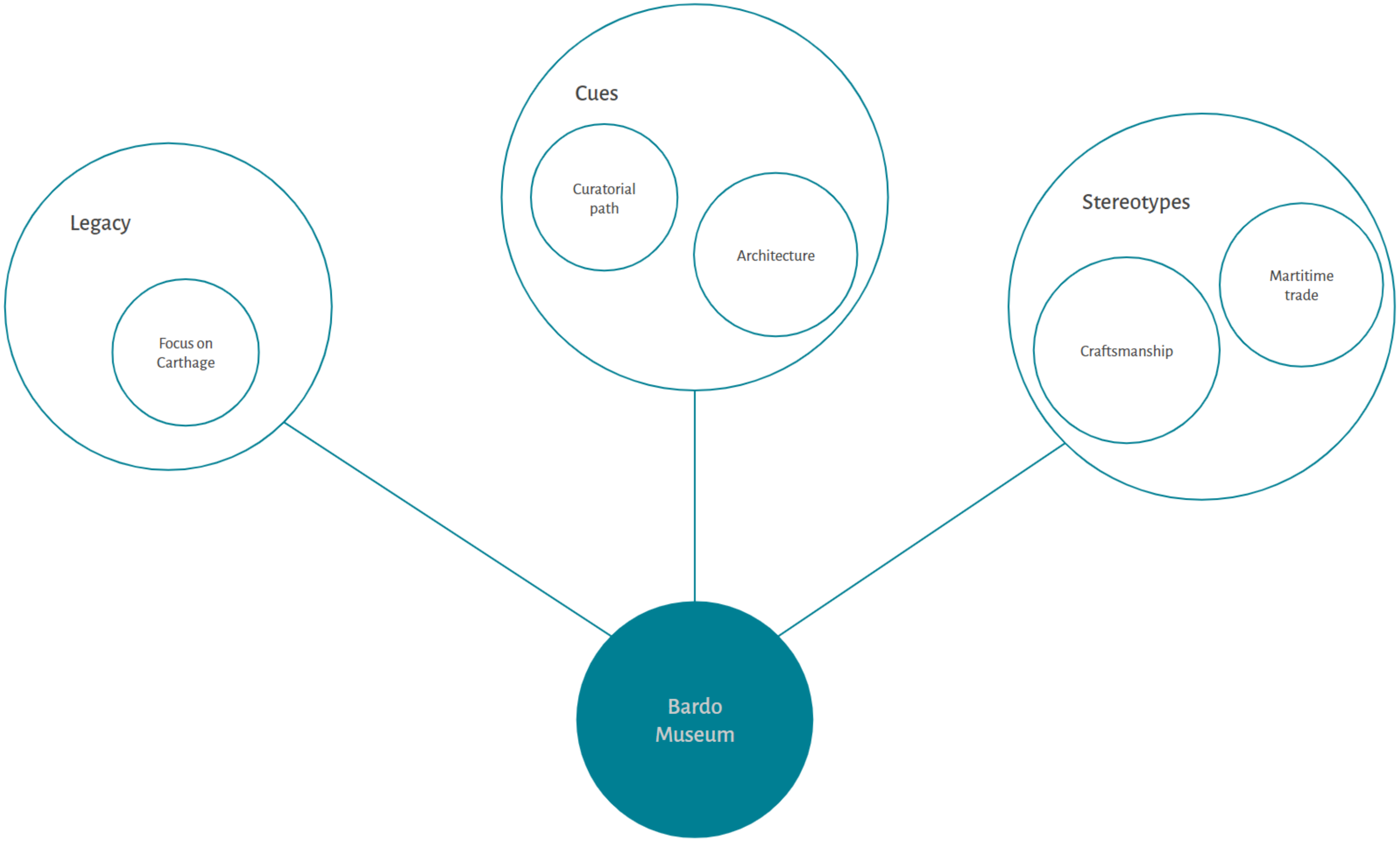


Figure 106: Summary chart of the Bardo Museum.

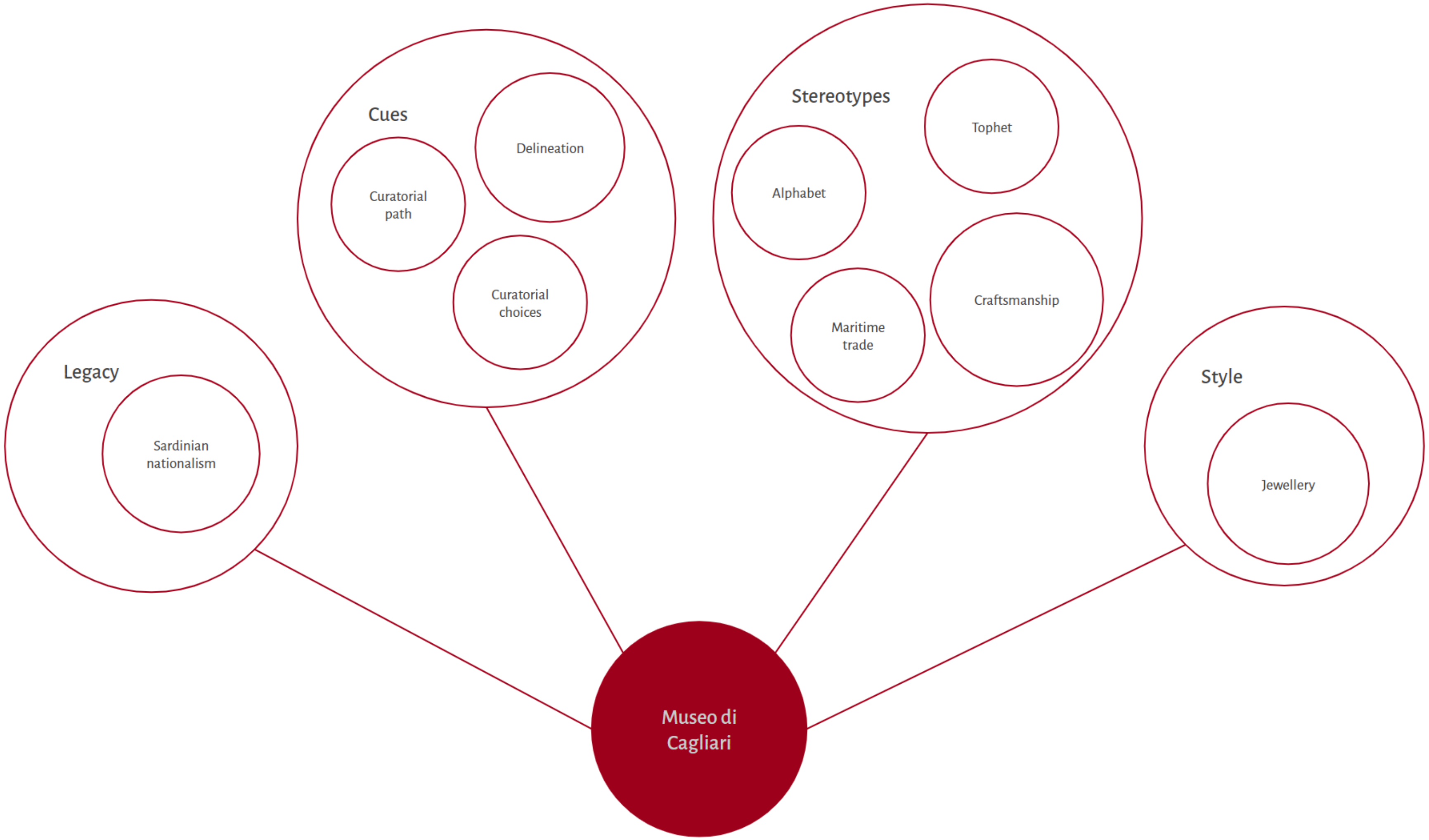


Figure 107: Summary chart of the Museo Archeologico Nazionale of Cagliari.

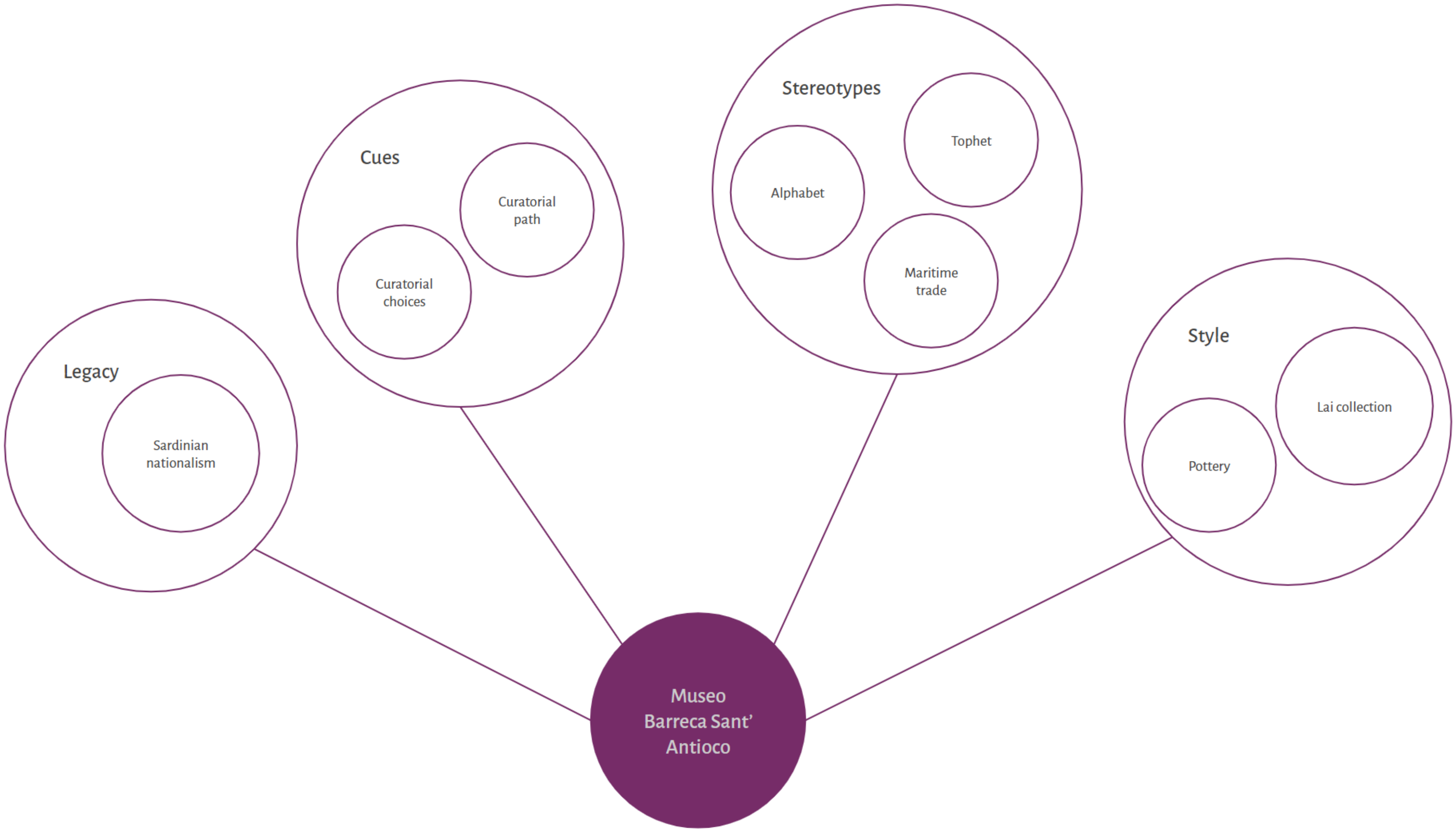


Figure 108: Summary chart of the Museo Barreca.

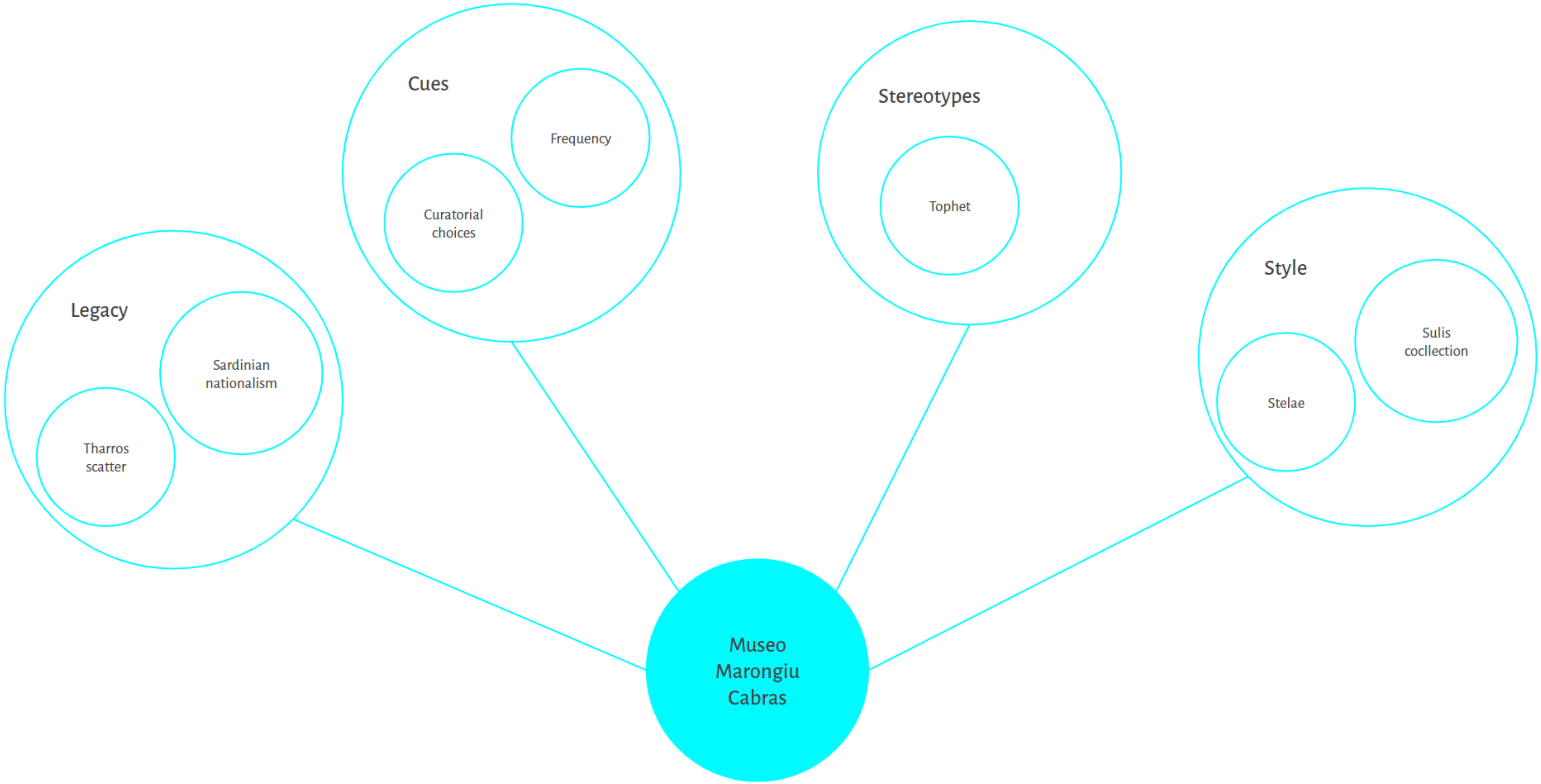


Figure 109: Summary chart of the Museo Marongiu.

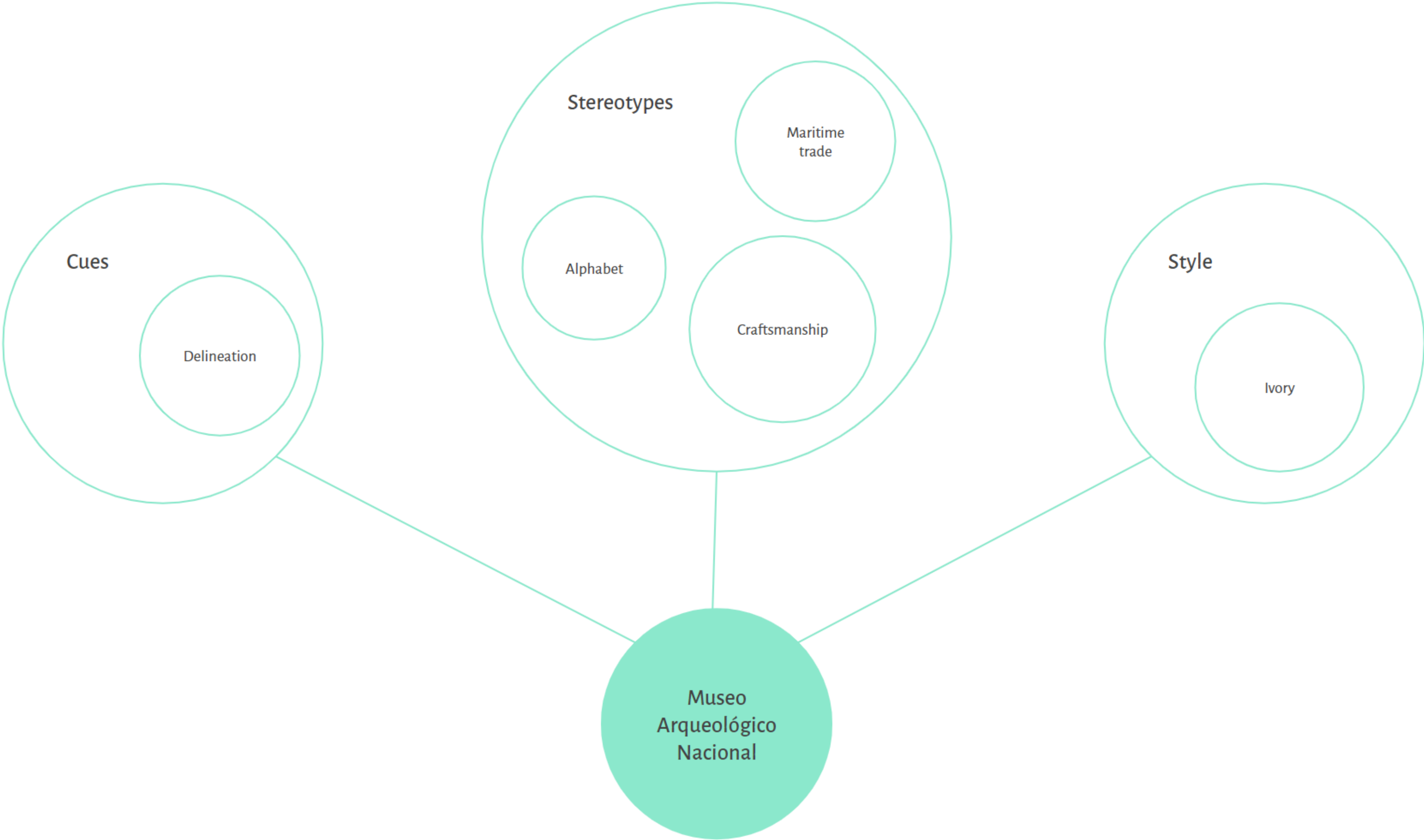


Figure 110: Summary chart of the Museo Arqueológico Nacional.

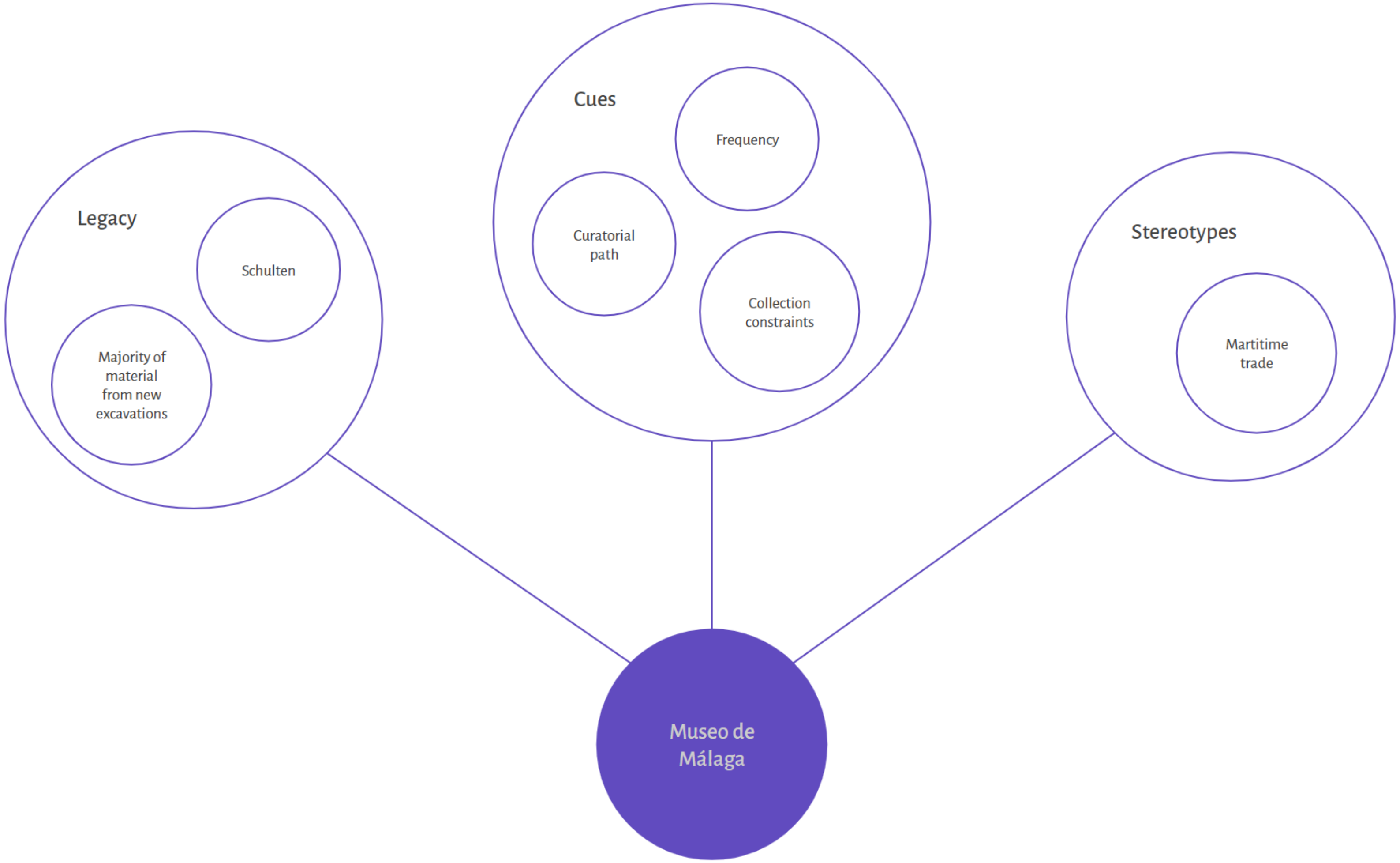


Figure 111: Summary chart of the Museo de Málaga.

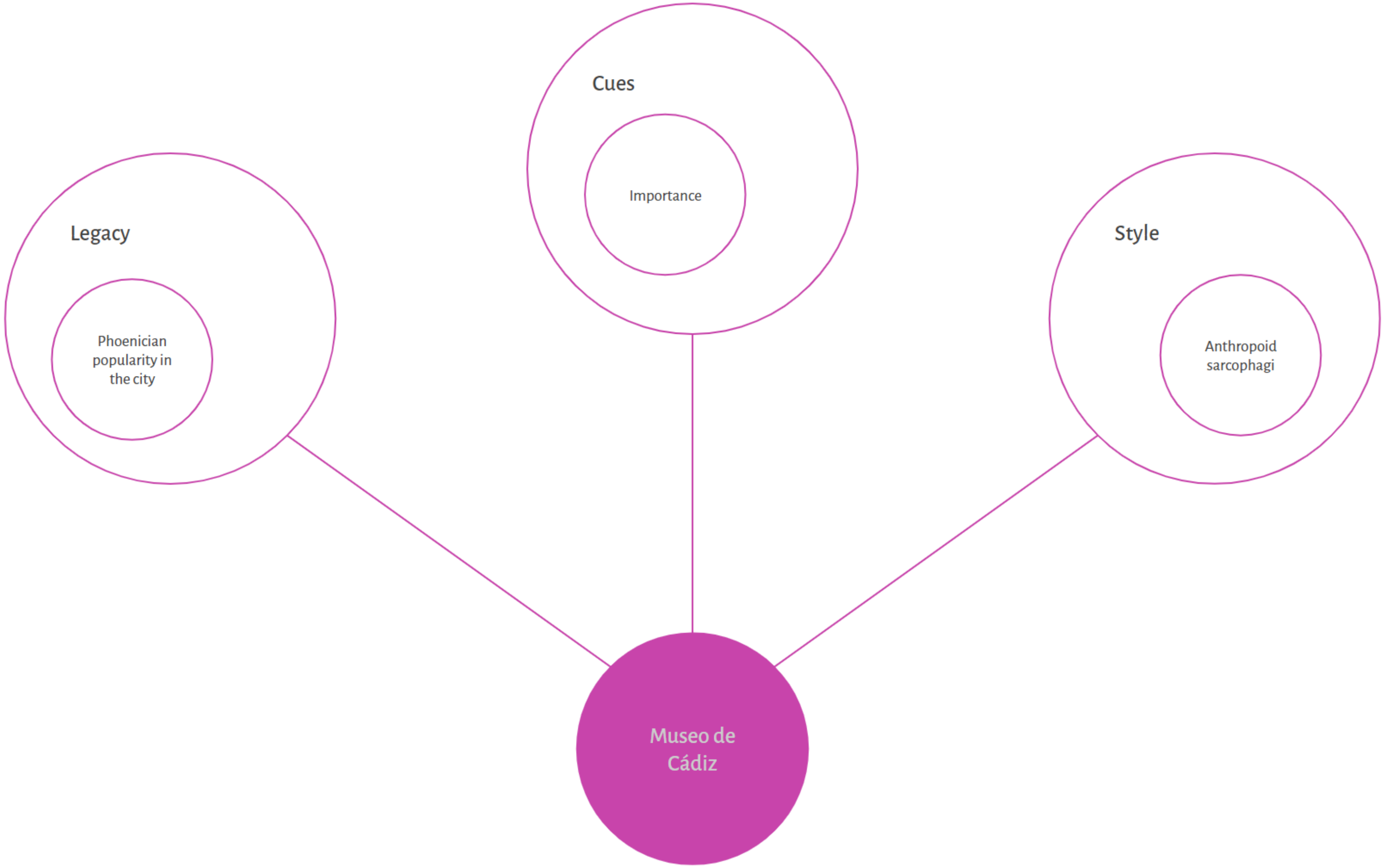


Figure 112: Summary chart of the Museo de Cádiz.

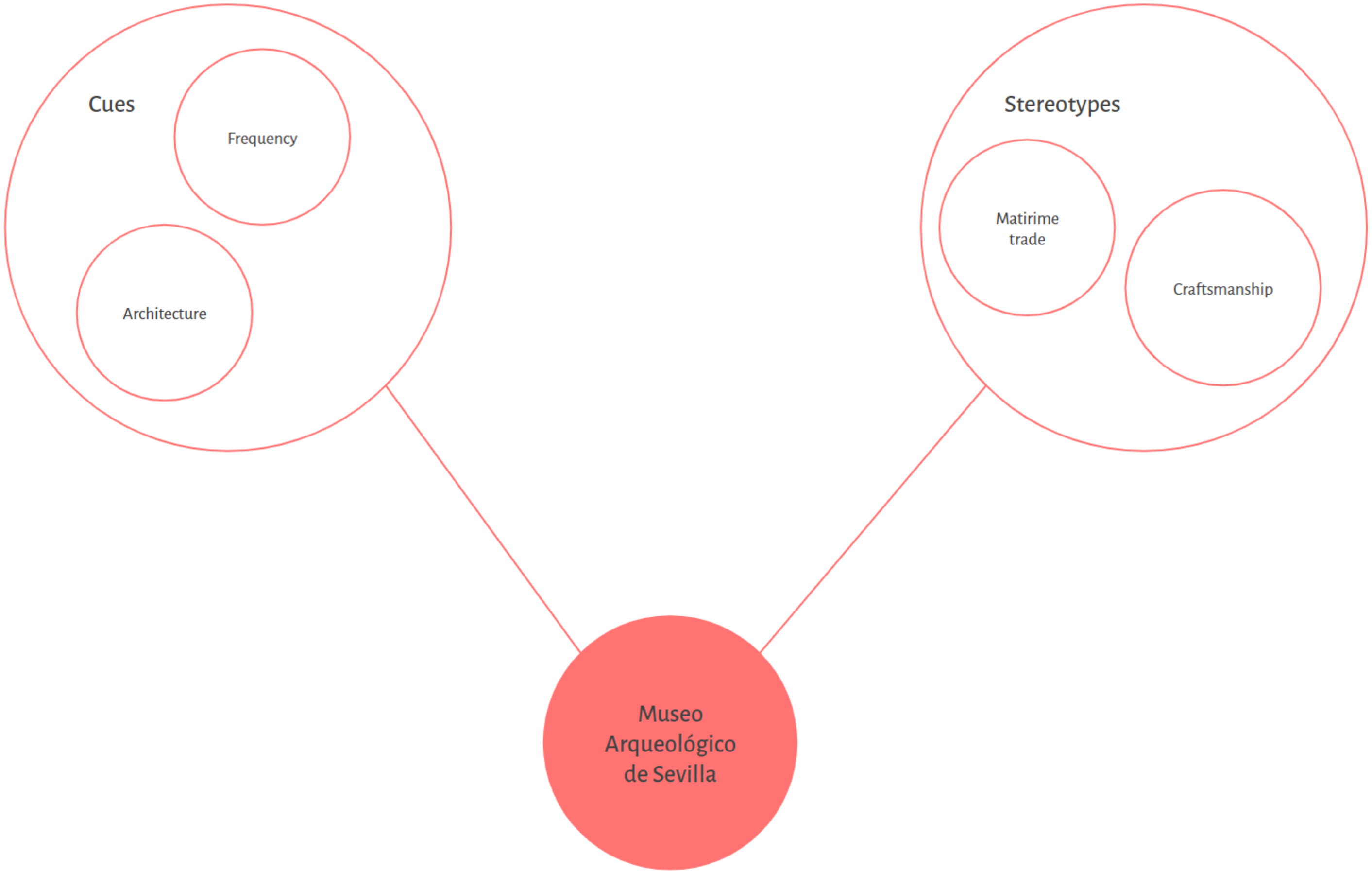


Figure 113: Summary chart of the Museo Arqueológico de Sevilla.

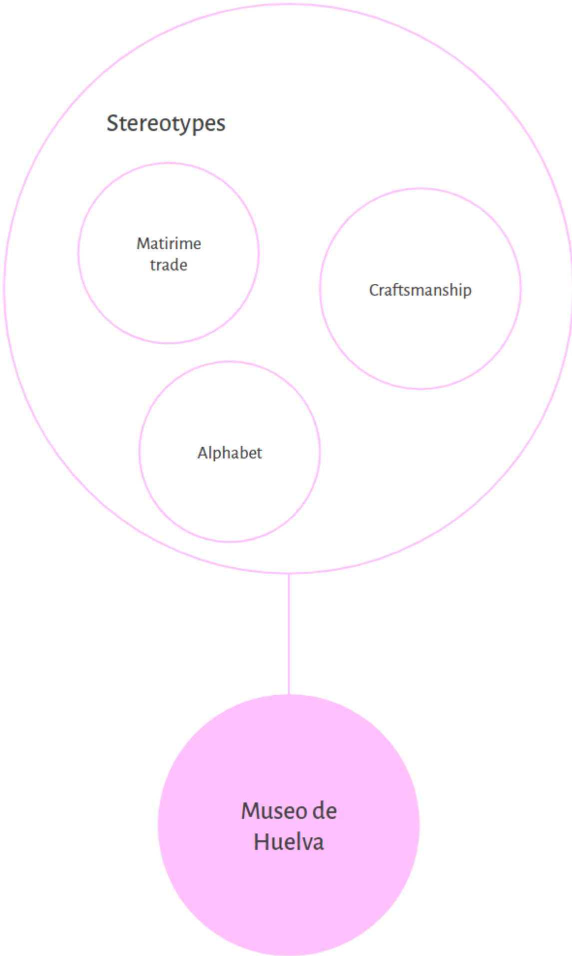


Figure 114: Summary chart of the Museo de Huelva.

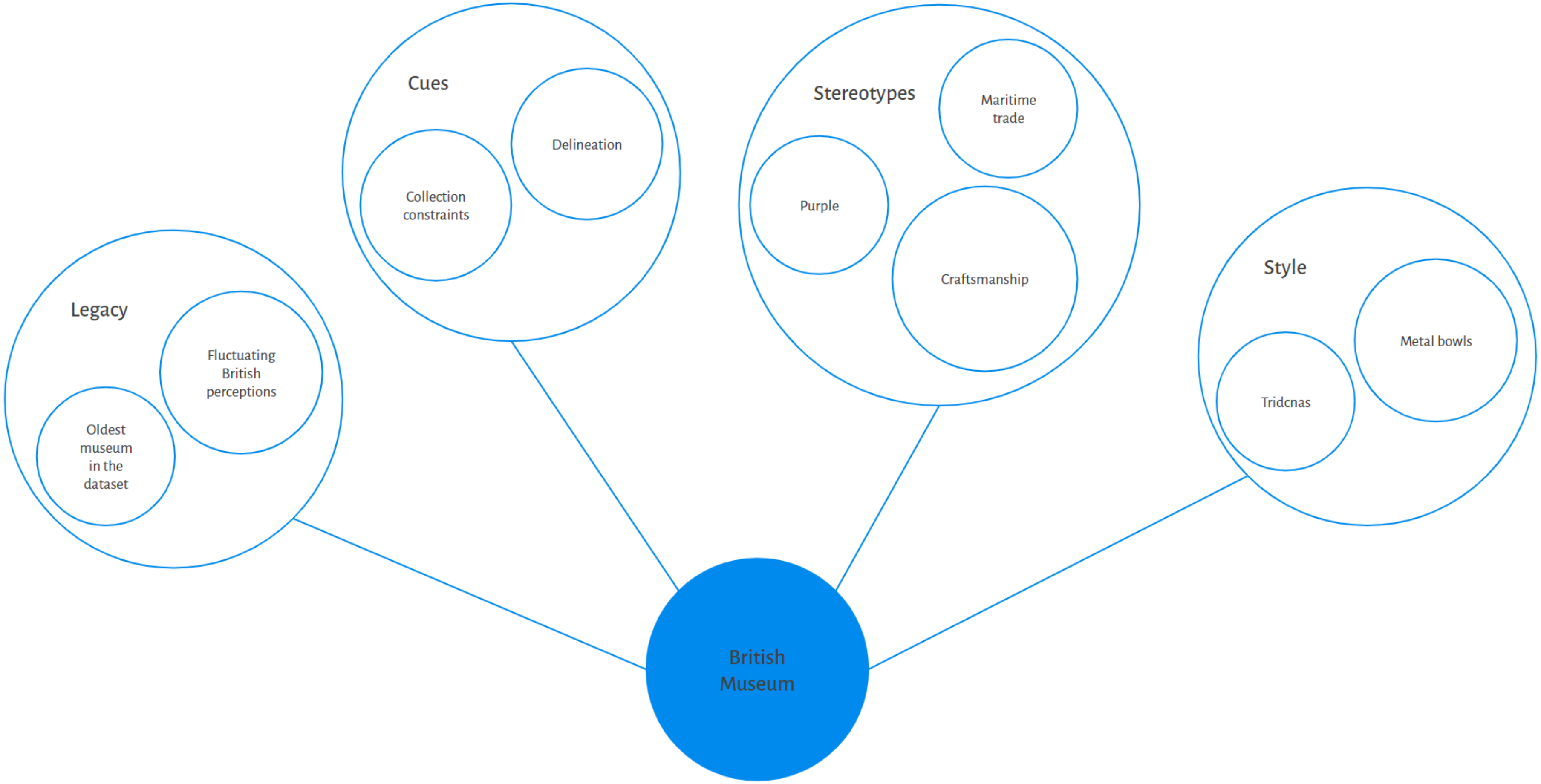


Figure 115: Summary chart of the British Museum.

Appendix 4 | Information sheet and consent form for curators

Participant Information Sheet

1. Research Project Title:

Elusive Phoenicians: Perceptions of Phoenician identity and material culture as reflected in museum records and displays

2. Invitation paragraph

You are being invited to take part in a research project. Before you decide whether or not to participate, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Ask us if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part. Thank you for reading this.

3. What is the project's purpose?

I am a PhD candidate at the University of Sheffield researching Phoenician identity and its expression in material culture and cultural heritage. One major axis of my research consists in studying Phoenician museum collections in order to track trends in displays and information. I will be working on several collections from major museums across the Mediterranean as well as some international large-scale museums and comparing the perceptions around these collections.

4. Why have I been chosen?

You have been chosen because of your role as museum curator and your expertise in the domain.

5. Do I have to take part?

It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do decide to take part, you will be given this information sheet to keep (and be asked to sign a consent form) and you can still withdraw at any time without any negative consequences. You do not have to give a reason. If you wish to withdraw from the research, please contact

6. What will happen to me if I take part? What do I have to do?

Your participation will involve a semi-structured interview in the form of an informal discussion. This will take around an hour, and I will be travelling to the museum for that, so you will not need to make any special arrangements. I will be taking notes as we are talking, but the interviews will not be recorded.

7. What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?

There are no risks associated with these interviews, simply a short time commitment.

8. What are the possible benefits of taking part?

Whilst there are no immediate benefits for those people participating in the project, it is hoped that this work will shed light on the different ways Phoenician collections are treated in museums and that it will also establish some links between the different museums with Phoenician collections.

9. Will my taking part in this project be kept confidential?

Due to the importance of your role in the project, your participation cannot be kept confidential, as I will be citing your name as my source for the information obtained during the interviews. If you wish, however, I will send you the statements I attribute you prior to submitting the thesis (or any publications that might arise from it) in order to avoid any misunderstandings.

10. What is the legal basis for processing my personal data?

According to data protection legislation, we are required to inform you that the legal basis we are applying in order to process your personal data is that 'processing is necessary for the performance of a task carried out in the public interest' (Article 6(1)(e)). Further information can be found in the University's Privacy Notice https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/govern/data-protection/privacy/general.

11. What will happen to the data collected, and the results of the research project?

The data collected will stay in the possession of the researcher and will not be shared outside of the research projects or any publications that might arise from it. The results of the research will be available in the completed thesis, and possibly in some related publications, which you will be informed of.

12. Who is organising and funding the research?

The University of Sheffield

13. Who is the Data Controller?

The [University of Sheffield/other] will act as the Data Controller for this study. This means that [the University] is responsible for looking after your information and using it properly.

14. Who has ethically reviewed the project?

This project has been ethically approved via the University of Sheffield's Ethics Review Procedure, as administered by the department of archaeology

15. What if something goes wrong and I wish to complain about the research?

Should you wish to raise a complaint, you should contact the main researcher or supervisor.

16. Contact for further information

Lead Researcher: Lamia Sassine	Supervisor: Dr. Susan Sherratt	Head of Department: Prof. Caroline Jackson
lsassine1@sheffield.ac.uk	s.sherratt@sheffield.ac.uk	c.m.jackson@sheffield.ac.uk
07963304193		

Thank you for taking part in the project.

Elusive Phoenicians: Perceptions of Phoenician identity and material culture as reflected in museum records and displays

Consent Form

Please tick the appropriate boxes	**Yes**	**No**
Taking Part in the Project		
I have read and understood the project information sheet dated 26/11/2018 or the project has been fully explained to me. (If you will answer No to this question please do not proceed with this consent form until you are fully aware of what your participation in the project will mean.)		
I have been given the opportunity to ask questions about the project.		
I agree to take part in the project. I understand that taking part in the project will include taking part in an interview		☐
I understand that my taking part is voluntary and that I can withdraw from the study at any time; I do not have to give any reasons for why I no longer want to take part and there will be no adverse consequences if I choose to withdraw.		☐
How my information will be used during and after the project		
I understand my personal details such as name, phone number, address and email address etc. will not be revealed to people outside the project.		☐
I understand and agree that my words may be quoted in publications, reports, web pages, and other research outputs. I understand that I will not be named in these outputs unless I specifically request this.		☐
I understand and agree that other authorised researchers will have access to this data only if they agree to preserve the confidentiality of the information as requested in this form.		☐
I understand and agree that other authorised researchers may use my data in publications, reports, web pages, and other research outputs, only if they agree to preserve the confidentiality of the information as requested in this form.		☐
So that the information you provide can be used legally by the researchers		
I agree to assign the copyright I hold in any materials generated as part of this project to The University of Sheffield.		

Name of participant [printed]	Signature	Date
Name of Researcher [printed]	Signature	Date
LAMIA SASSINE		

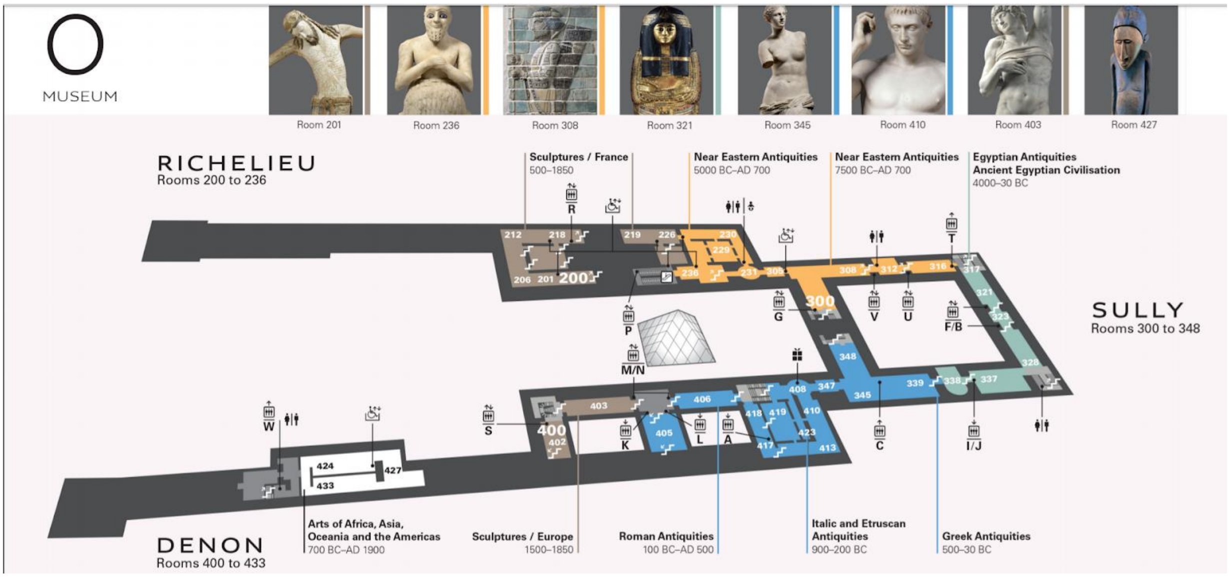
Project contact details for further information:

Lead Researcher: Lamia Sassine	Supervisor: Dr. Susan Sherratt	Head of Department: Prof. Caroline Jackson
lsassine1@sheffield.ac.uk	s.sherratt@sheffield.ac.uk	c.m.jackson@sheffield.ac.uk
07963304193		

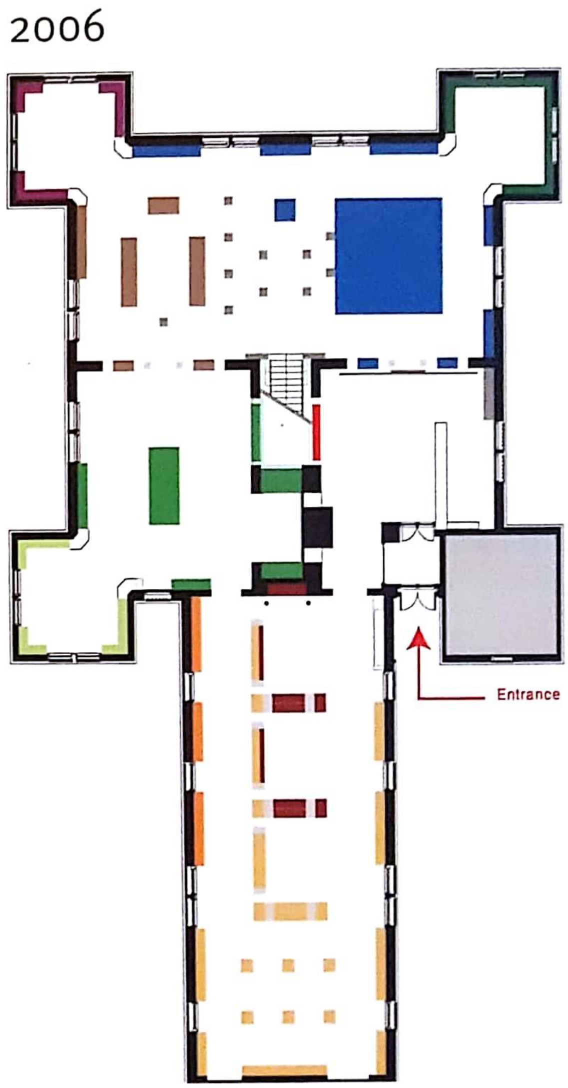
The template of this consent form has been approved by the University of Sheffield Research Ethics Committee and is available to view here: https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/rs/ethicsandintegrity/ethicspolicy/further-guidance/homepage

Appendix 5 | Plans of the museums

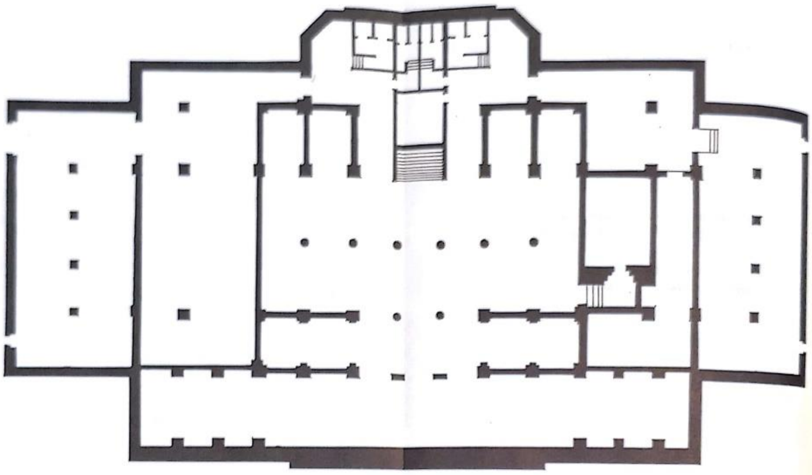
The following appendix shows plans of all the museums except those of Idalion and Sant'Antioco, for which none was available. The plans are extracted from the museums' websites, brochures, or labelling within the museum. Credits for the plans go back to each museum.



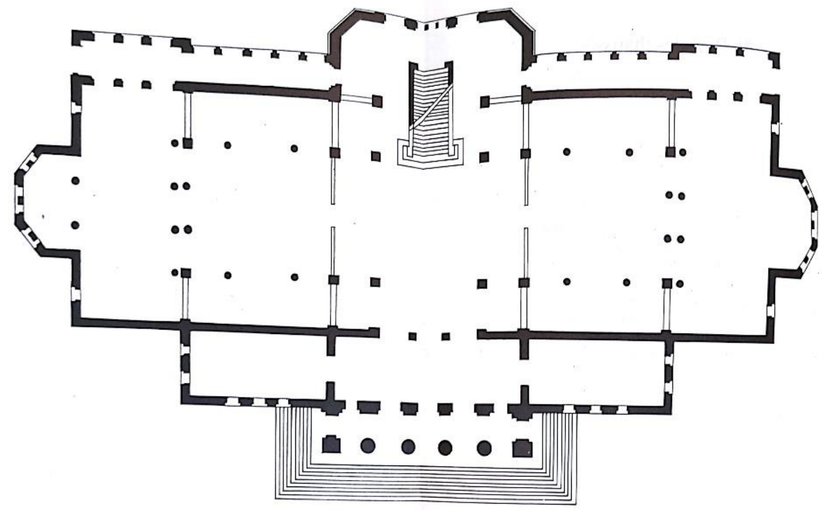
Museum Plan 1: Louvre. Phoenician material is in the yellow section



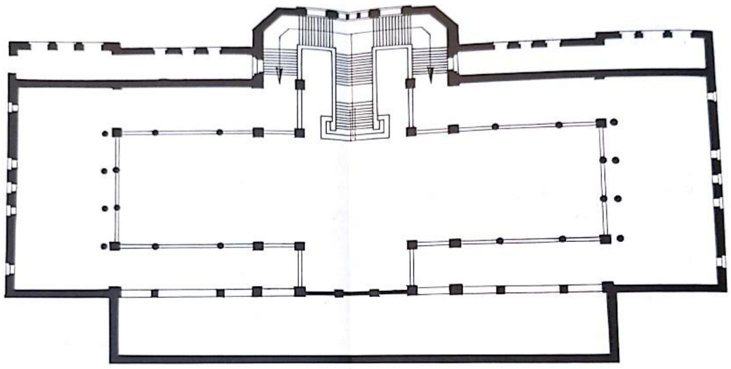
Museum Plan 2: AUB Museum. Phoenicia material is in the yellow, orange, and green sections.



PLAN N° 3 : SOUS-SOL

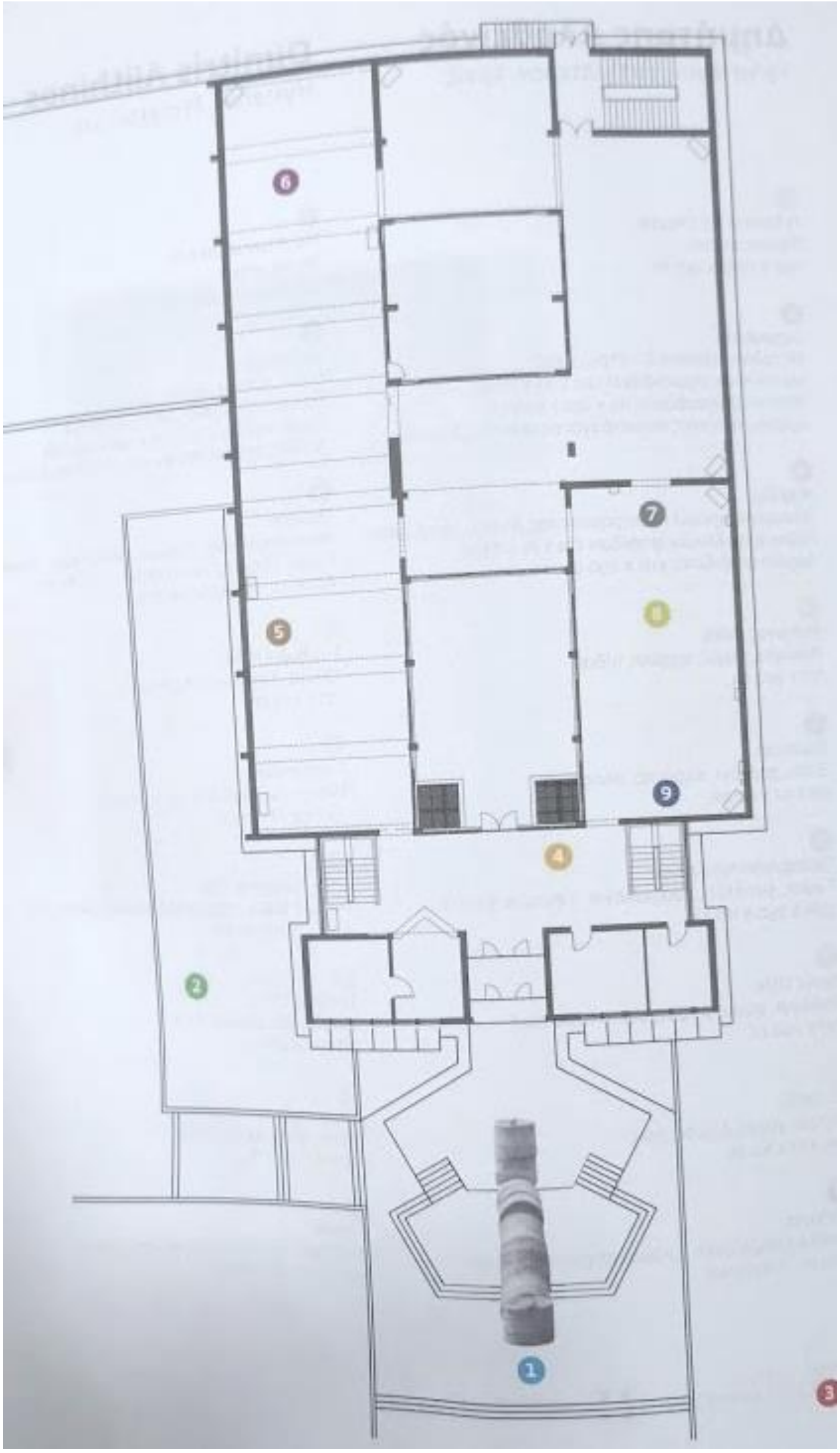


PLAN N° 2 : REZ-DE-CHAUSSÉE

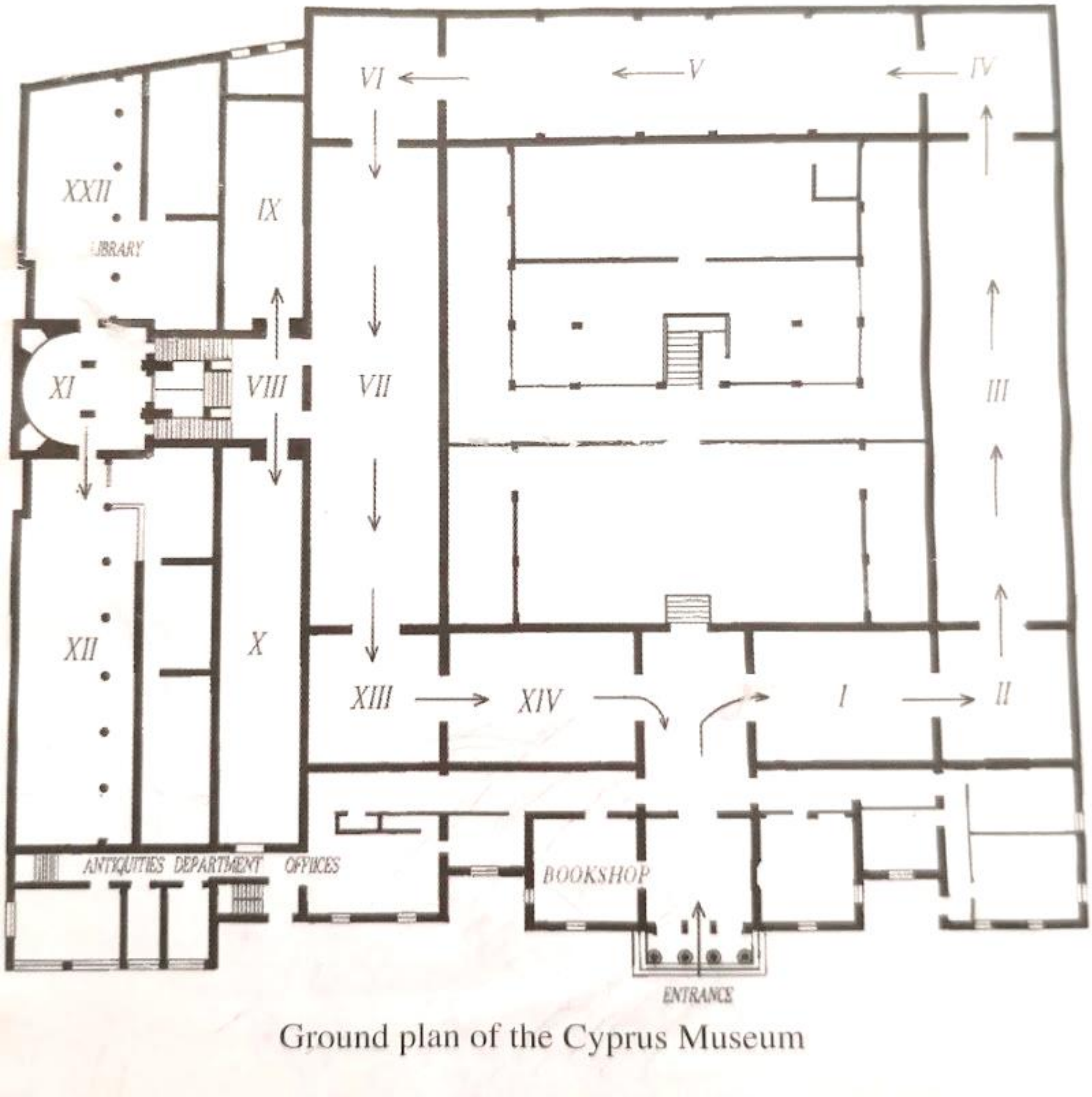


PLAN N° 1 : ÉTAGE SUPÉRIEUR

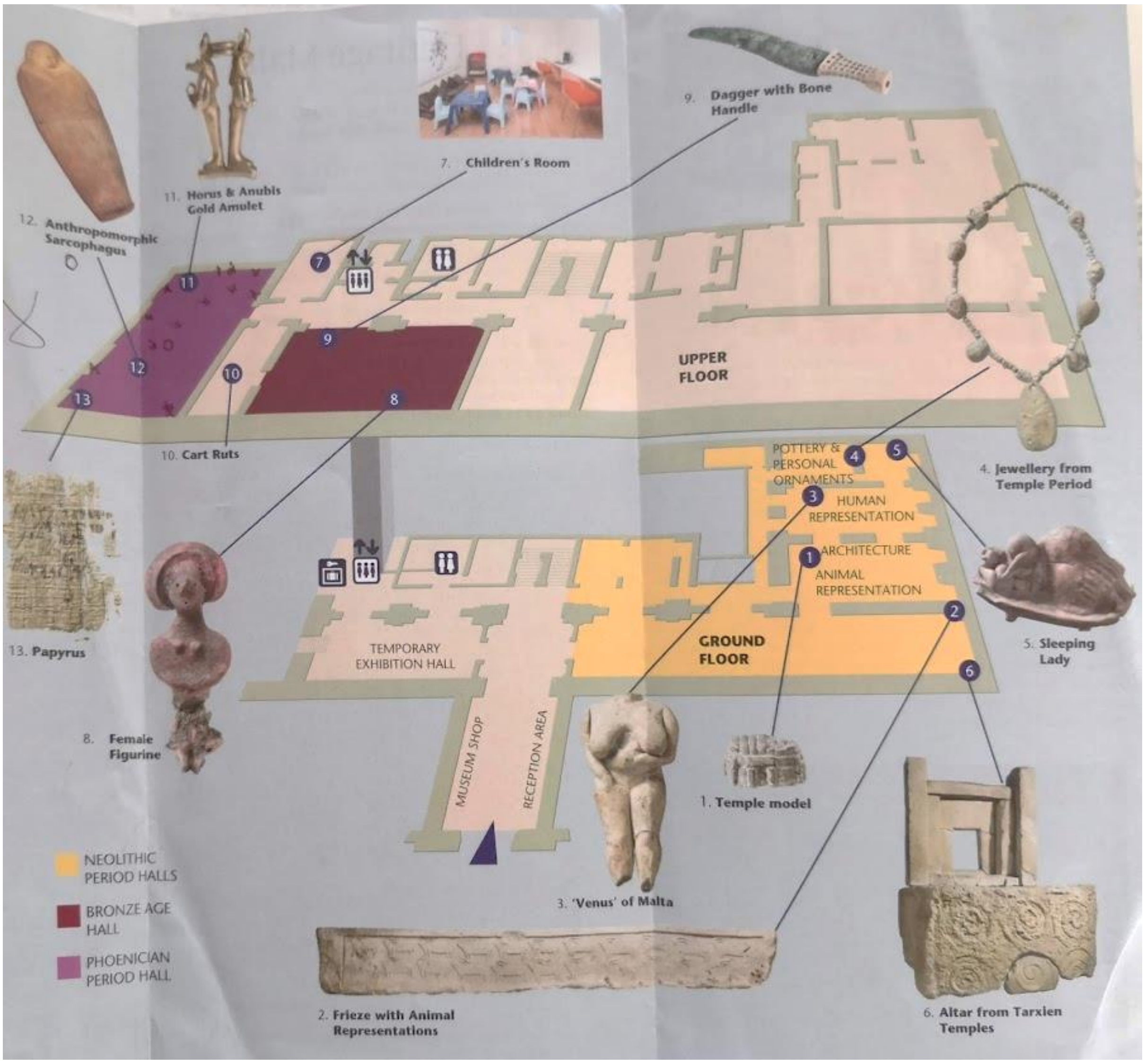
Museum Plan 3: Beirut National Museum: lower, ground, and first floors. Phoenician material is distributed throughout the museum.



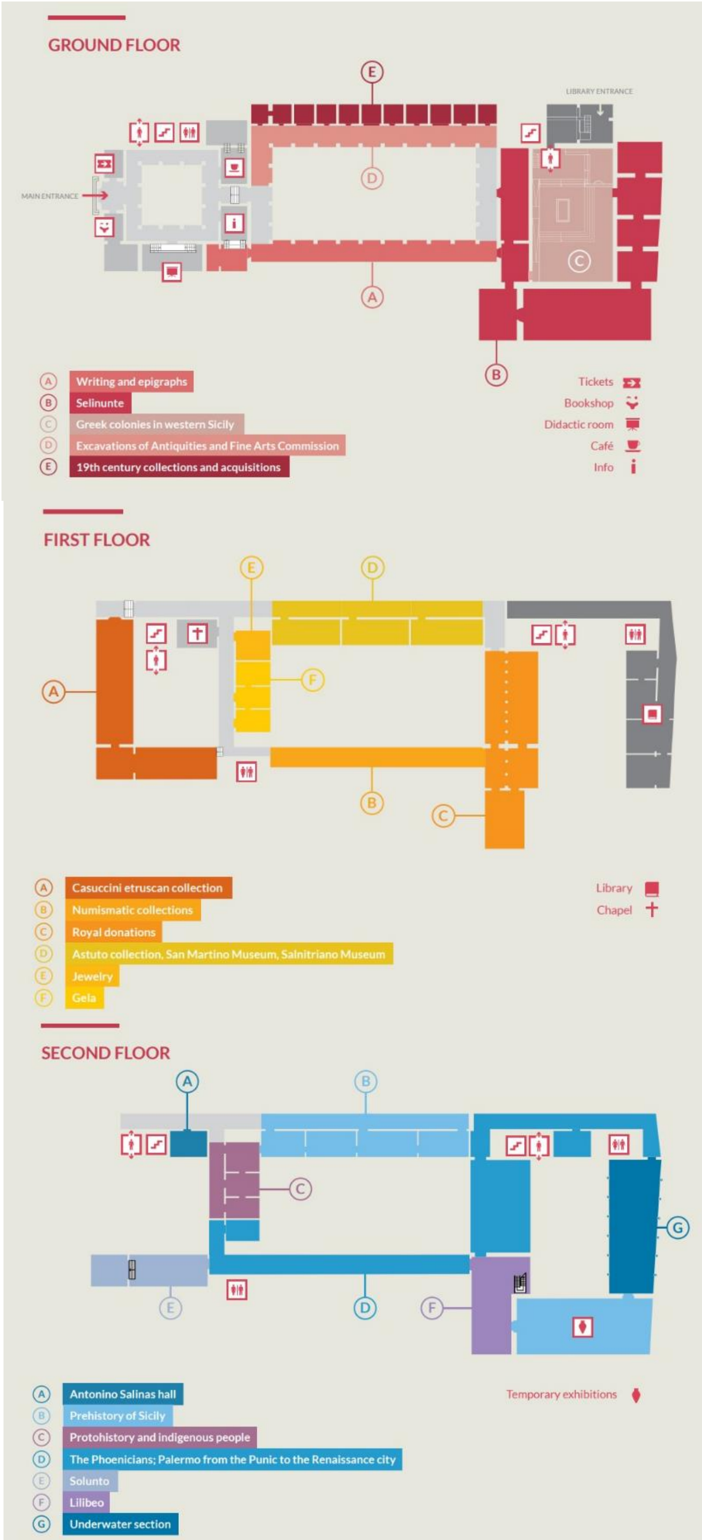
Museum Plan 4: Limassol Museum. Phoenician material is distributed throughout the museum.



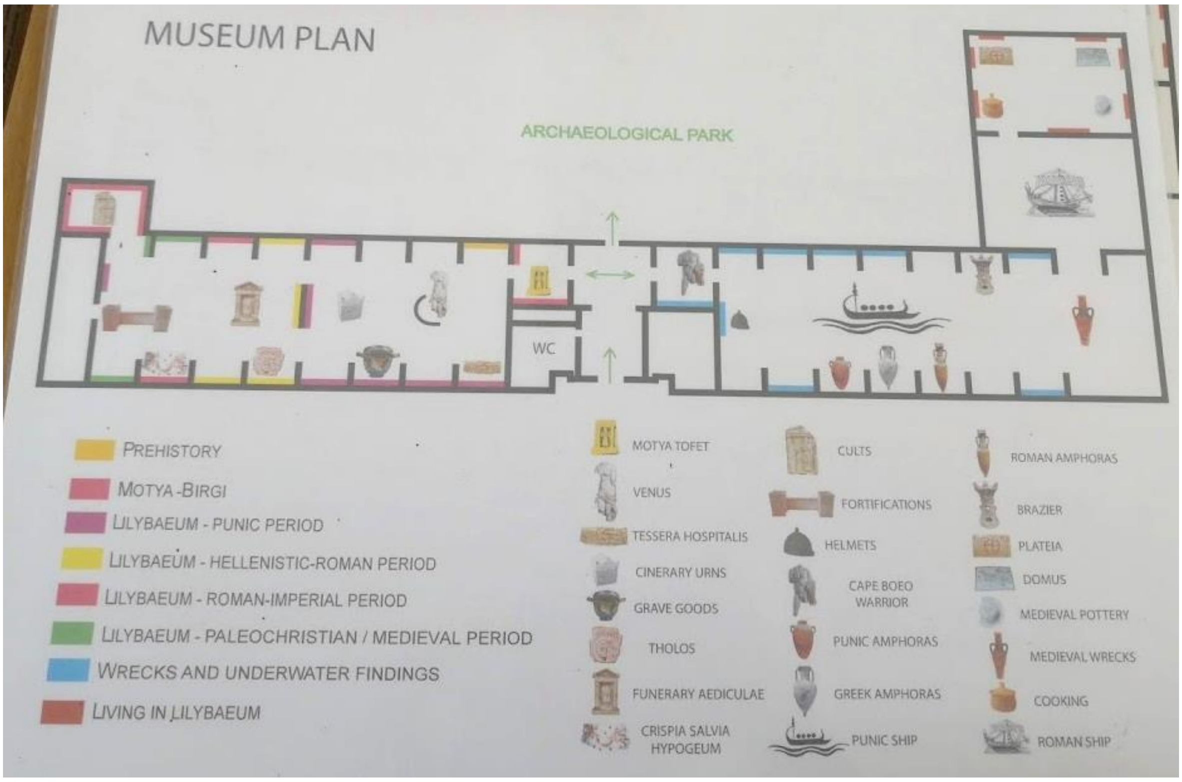
Museum Plan 5: Cyprus Museum. Phoenician material is distributed throughout the museum.



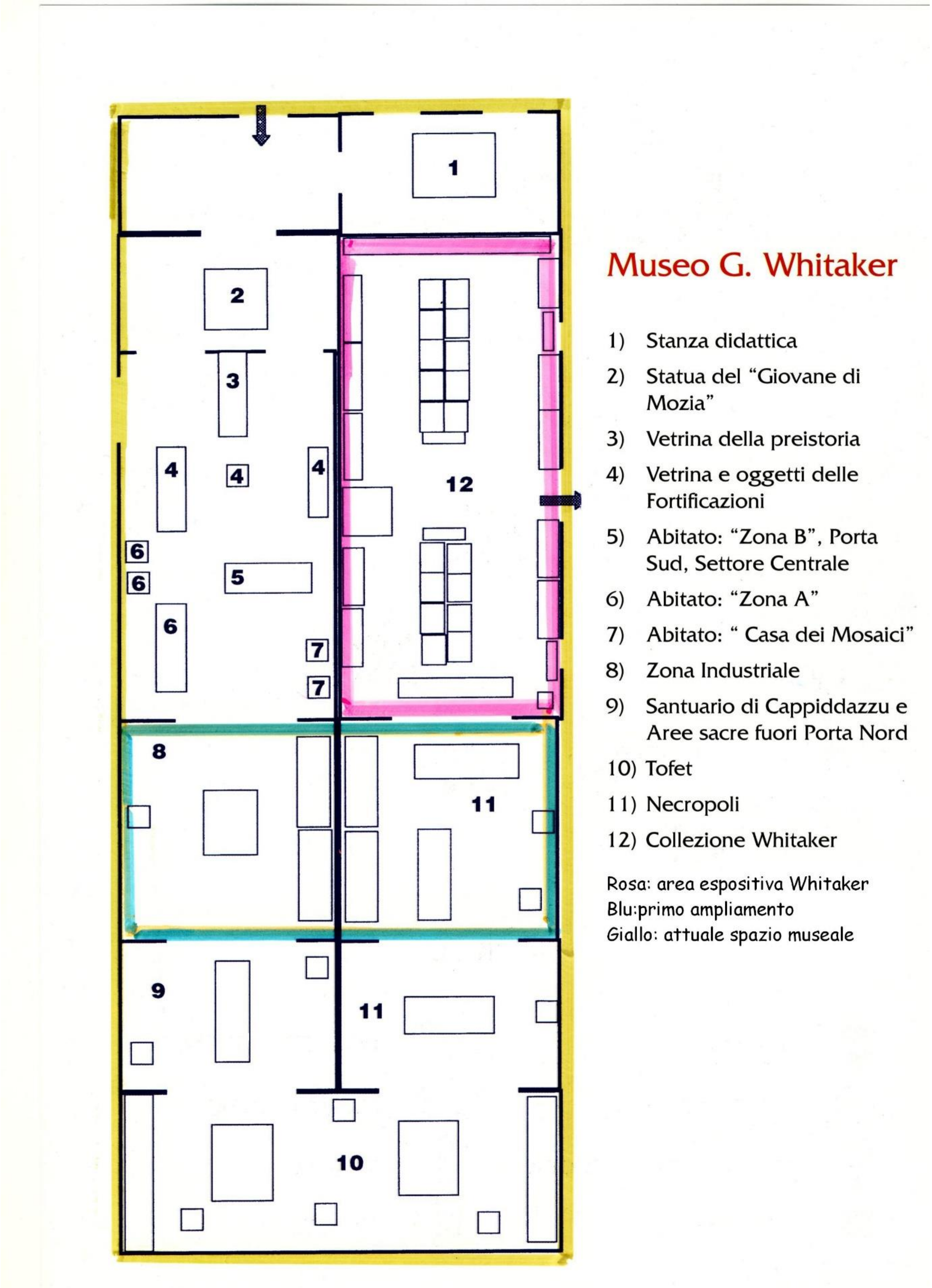
Museum Plan 6: National Museum of Archaeology, Valletta. Phoenician material is in the purple gallery.



Museum Plan 7: Museo Salinas Palermo. Note that the first and second floors were closed at the time of the visit.



Museum Plan 8: Museo Lilibeo Marsala. Phoenician material is distributed throughout the museum.



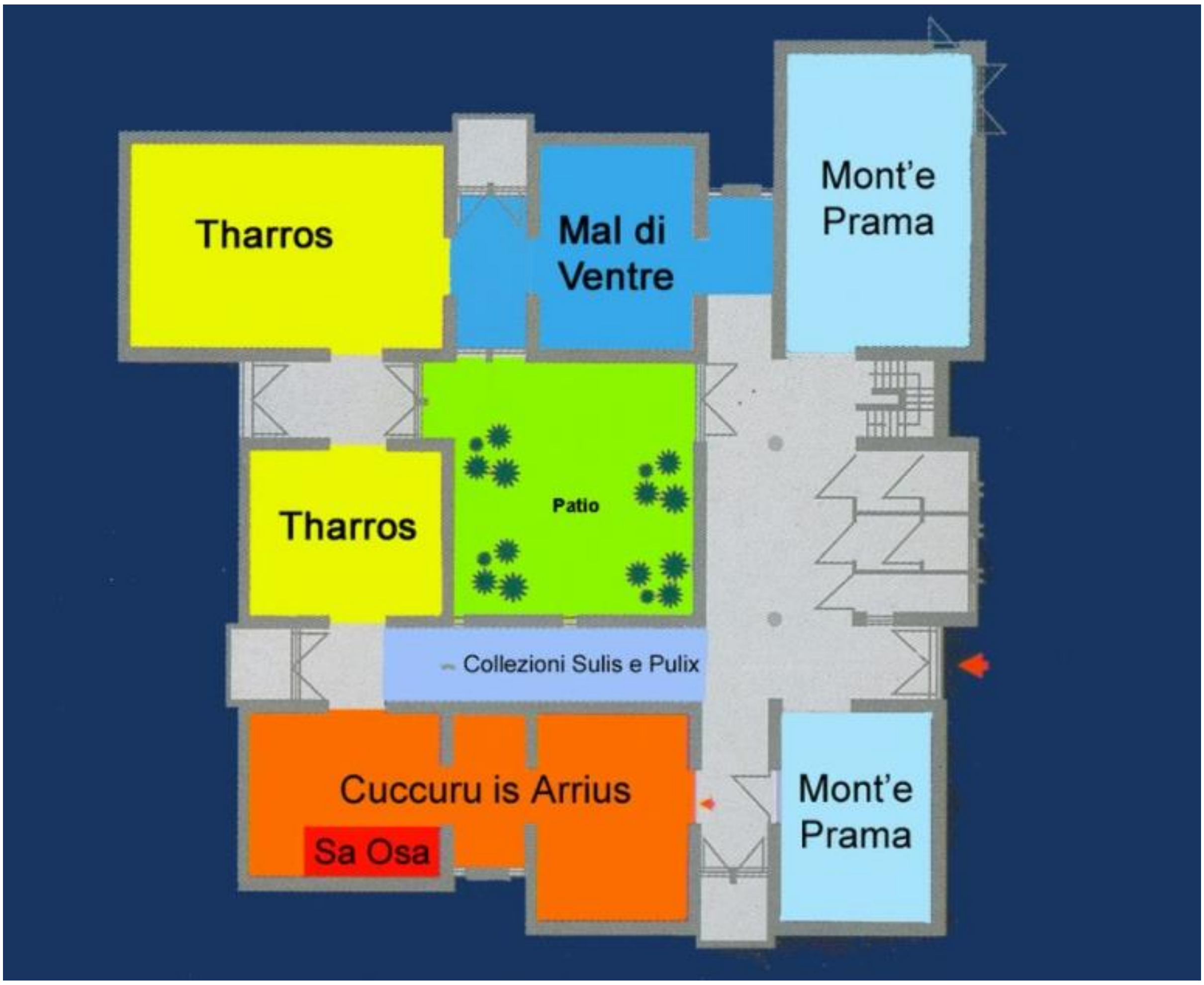
Museum Plan 9: Museo Whitaker Mozia. Phoenician material is distributed throughout the museum (in yellow).



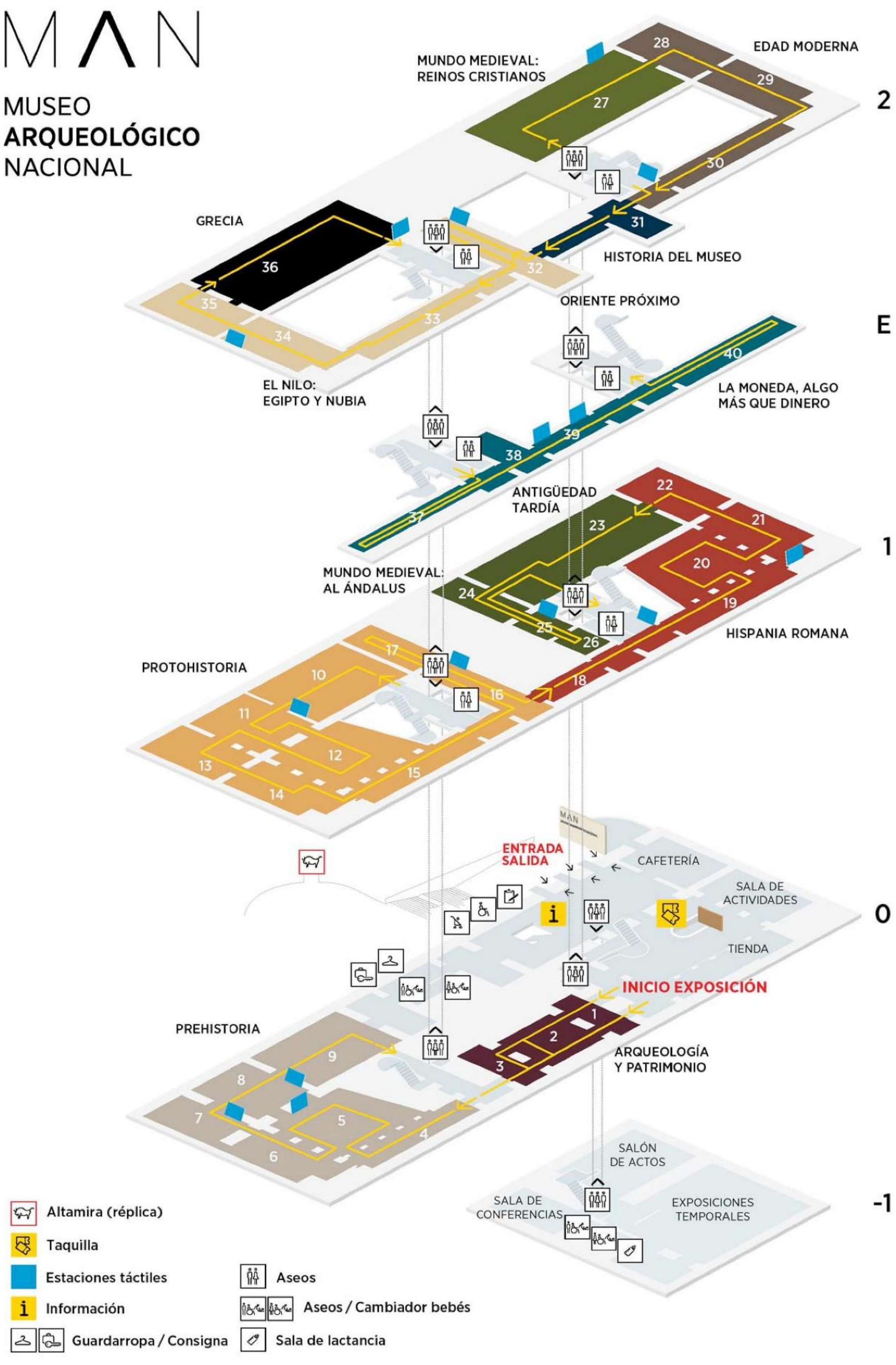
Museum Plan 10: First floor of the Bardo Museum. Phoenician material is located in the rooms in red and brown.



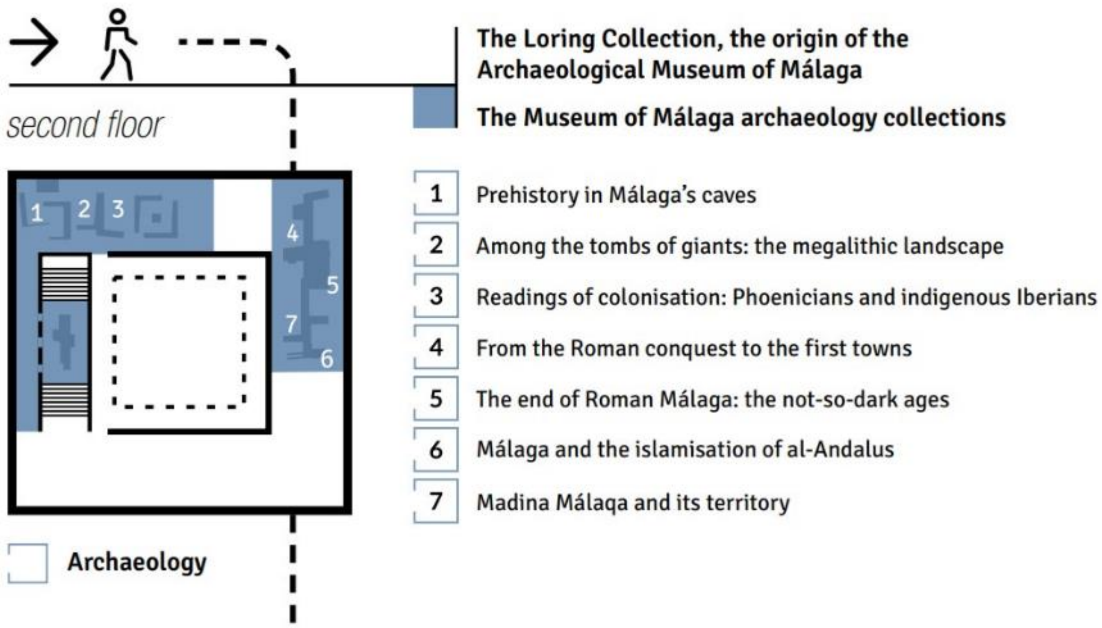
Museum Plan 11: Cagliari Museum. Phoenician material is distributed throughout the museum.



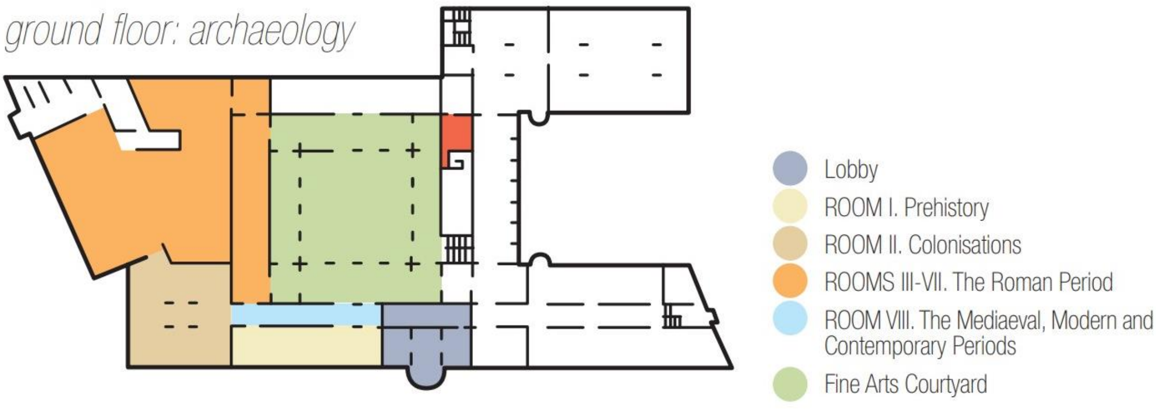
Museum Plan 12: Museo Marongiu Cabras. Phoenician material is located in the yellow area and in the Sulis and Pulix collection zone.



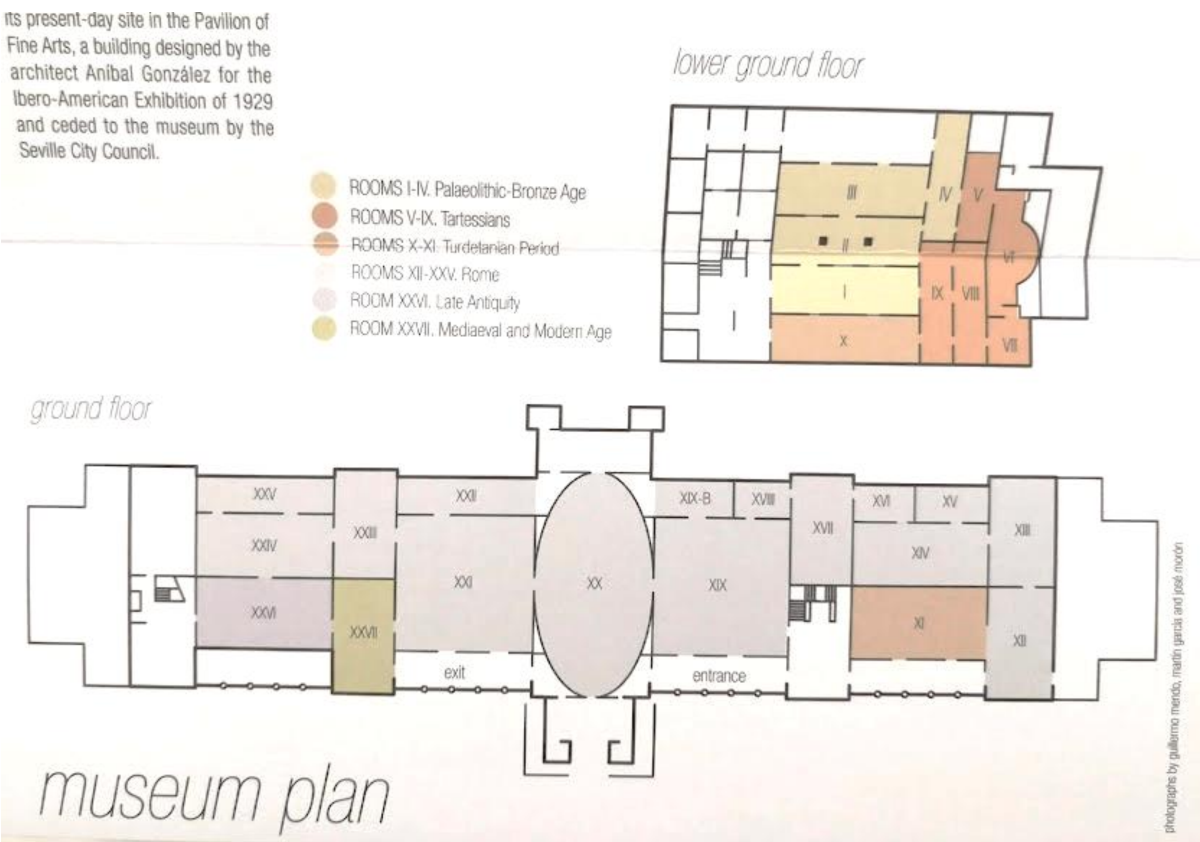
Museum Plan 13: Museo Arqueologico Nacional. Phoenician material is located in the yellow section.



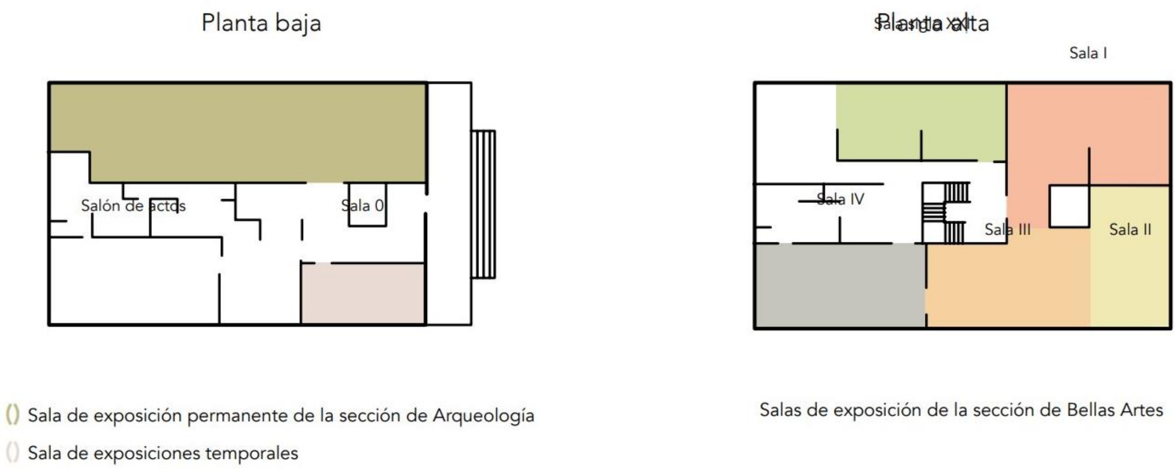
Museum Plan 14: Second floor of the Museo de Malaga. Phoenician material is located in sections 3 and 4.



Museum Plan 15: Ground floor of the Museo de Cádiz. Phoenician material is located in the beige section (room II).



Museum Plan 16: Museo de Sevilla. Phoenician material is located in the orange sections.



Museum Plan 17: Museo de Huelva. Phoenician material is located in the dark green section.

Upper floors

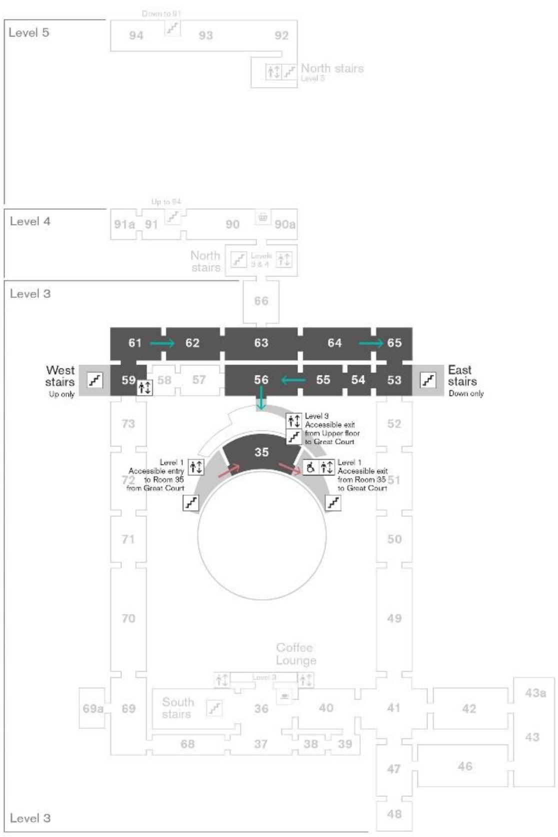
Accessible toilet

Stairs

Lift

Permanent collection one-way direction

Special exhibition ticket holders



Ancient Egypt

Egyptian life and death
The Michael Cohen Gallery
Room 61

Egyptian death and afterlife: mummies
The Roxie Walker Galleries
Rooms 62–63

Early Egypt
The Raymond and Beverly Sackler Gallery
Room 64

Sudan, Egypt and Nubia
The Raymond and Beverly Sackler Gallery
Room 65

Middle East

Ancient South Arabia
The Raymond and Beverly Sackler Gallery
Room 53

Anatolia and Urartu 7000–300 BC
The Raymond and Beverly Sackler Gallery
Room 54

Mesopotamia 1500–539 BC
The Raymond and Beverly Sackler Gallery
Room 55

Mesopotamia 6000–1500 BC
The Raymond and Beverly Sackler Gallery
Room 56

Exhibitions

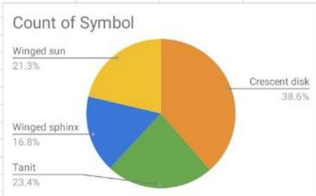
Special exhibitions
The Joseph Hotung Great Court Gallery
Room 35

10/2020

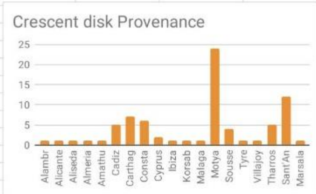
Museum Plan 18: Upper floors of the British Museum. Phoenician material is located in rooms 57-59 and 72 (for Cyprus).

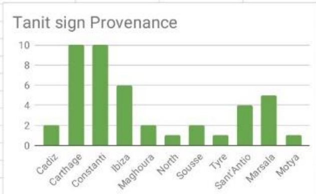
Appendix 6 | Data for iconography map

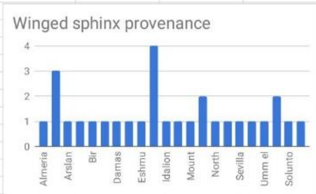
Symbol	Object Type	Museum	Provenance	Date	Notes
Crescent disk	Terracotta figurine of model naos with erect god	Louvre	Alambra	8-5th c. BC	
Crescent disk	Necklace	Villajoyosa	Alicante	5th c. BC	
Crescent disk	Gold necklace	MAN	Aliseda	7th c. BC	
Crescent disk	Gold ring	MAN	Almeria	6th c. BC	
Crescent disk	Terracotta model temple	Limassol	Amathus	7-5th c. BC	
Crescent disk	Glass	Cadiz	Cadiz	5-2nd c. BC	
Crescent disk	Gold pendant	Cadiz	Cadiz	6th c. BC	
Crescent disk	Gold pendant	Cadiz	Cadiz	6th c. BC	
Crescent disk	Gold pendant	Cadiz	Cadiz	6th c. BC	
Crescent disk	Gold pendant	Cadiz	Cadiz	6th c. BC	
Crescent disk	Stele	Bardo	Carthage	3rd c. BC	
Crescent disk	Stele	Bardo	Carthage	4th c. BC	
Crescent disk	Gold pendant	Louvre	Carthage	7-6th c. BC	
Crescent disk	Gold necklace	Bardo	Carthage	7-6th c. BC	
Crescent disk	Gold pendant	Carthage	Carthage	7th c. BC	
Crescent disk	Gold pendant	Carthage	Carthage	7th c. BC	
Crescent disk	Gold pendant	Carthage	Carthage		
Crescent disk	Stele	Louvre	Constantine	2nd c. BC	
Crescent disk	Stele	Louvre	Constantine	2nd c. BC	
Crescent disk	Stele	Louvre	Constantine	2nd c. BC	
Crescent disk	Stele	Louvre	Constantine	3-1st c. BC	
Crescent disk	Stele	Louvre	Constantine	3-2nd c. BC	
Crescent disk	Stele	Louvre	Constantine	3rd c. BC	
Crescent disk	Terracotta model temple	Cyprus	Cyprus	8-5th c. BC	
Crescent disk	Terracotta model temple	Cyprus	Cyprus	8-5th c. BC	
Crescent disk	Gold pendant	MAN	Ibiza	6th c. BC	
Crescent disk	Seal	Louvre	Korsabad	8th c. BC	
Crescent disk	Silver pendant	Malaga	Malaga	5-4th c. BC	
Crescent disk	Gold pendant	Whitaker	Motya	7-6th c. BC	
Crescent disk	Stele	Louvre	Sousse	4-3rd c. BC	
Crescent disk	Stele	Louvre	Sousse	4th c. BC	
Crescent disk	Stele	Louvre	Sousse	4th c. BC	
Crescent disk	Stele	Louvre	Sousse	4th c. BC	
Crescent disk	Terracotta figurine	Beirut	Tyre	7th c. BC	
Crescent disk	Gold necklace	Villajoyosa	Villajoyosa	7-6th c. BC	
Crescent disk	Stele	Cagliari	Tharros		
Crescent disk	Gold pendant	Cagliari	Tharros	7-5th c. BC	
Crescent disk	Gold pendant	Cagliari	Tharros		
Crescent disk	Stele	Cagliari	Sant'Antioco	3-2nd c. BC	
Crescent disk	Stele	Cagliari	Sant'Antioco	2nd c. BC	
Crescent disk	Stele	Cagliari	Sant'Antioco		
Crescent disk	Stele	MAB	Sant'Antioco		
Crescent disk	Stele	MAB	Sant'Antioco		
Crescent disk	Stele	MAB	Sant'Antioco		
Crescent disk	Stele	MAB	Sant'Antioco	3-2nd c. BC	
Crescent disk	Stele	MAB	Sant'Antioco	3-2nd c. BC	
Crescent disk	Stele	MAB	Sant'Antioco	3-2nd c. BC	
Crescent disk	Stele	MAB	Sant'Antioco	3-2nd c. BC	
Crescent disk	Stele	MAB	Sant'Antioco	3-2nd c. BC	
Crescent disk	Stele	MAB	Sant'Antioco		
Crescent disk	Stele	Cabras	Tharros	6-4th c. BC	
Crescent disk	Stele	Cabras	Tharros	6-4th c. BC	
Crescent disk	Stele	Lilibeo	Motya	6-5th c. BC	
Crescent disk	Stele	Lilibeo	Marsala	2nd c. BC	
Crescent disk	Stele	Whitaker	Motya		
Crescent disk	Stele	Whitaker	Motya		
Crescent disk	Stele	Whitaker	Motya	6-5th c. BC	
Crescent disk	Stele	Whitaker	Motya	6th c. BC	
Crescent disk	Stele	Whitaker	Motya		
Crescent disk	Stele	Whitaker	Motya		
Crescent disk	Stele	Whitaker	Motya		
Crescent disk	Stele	Whitaker	Motya		
Crescent disk	Stele	Whitaker	Motya		
Crescent disk	Stele	Whitaker	Motya	6th c. BC	
Crescent disk	Stele	Whitaker	Motya		
Crescent disk	Stele	Whitaker	Motya		
Crescent disk	Stele	Whitaker	Motya		
Crescent disk	Stele	Whitaker	Motya		
Crescent disk	Stele	Whitaker	Motya		
Crescent disk	Stele	Whitaker	Motya		
Crescent disk	Stele	Whitaker	Motya		
Crescent disk	Stele	Whitaker	Motya		
Crescent disk	Stele	Whitaker	Motya		
Crescent disk	Stele	Whitaker	Motya		
Crescent disk	Stele	Whitaker	Motya		
Crescent disk	Stele	Whitaker	Motya		
Tanit	Stele	Cadiz	Cadiz	6th c. BC	
Tanit	Gold ring	Cadiz	Cadiz	6th c. BC	
Tanit	Stele	Bardo	Carthage	1st c. BC	
Tanit	Stele	Louvre	Carthage	2nd c. BC	
Tanit	Stele	Louvre	Carthage	3rd c. BC	
Tanit	Stele	Louvre	Carthage	3rd c. BC	
Tanit	Stele	Louvre	Carthage	3rd c. BC	
Tanit	Gold ring	Louvre	Carthage	4-3rd c. BC	
Tanit	Stele	Bardo	Carthage	4th c. BC	
Tanit	Stele	Bardo	Carthage	4th c. BC	
Tanit	Stele	Bardo	Carthage	4th c. BC	
Tanit	Stele	Carthage	Carthage	4th c. BC	
Tanit	Stele	Louvre	Constantine	2nd c. BC	
Tanit	Stele	Louvre	Constantine	2nd c. BC	
Tanit	Stele	Louvre	Constantine	2nd c. BC	
Tanit	Stele	Louvre	Constantine	2nd c. BC	
Tanit	Stele	Louvre	Constantine	2nd c. BC	
Tanit	Stele	Louvre	Constantine	2nd c. BC	
Tanit	Stele	Louvre	Constantine	3-1st c. BC	

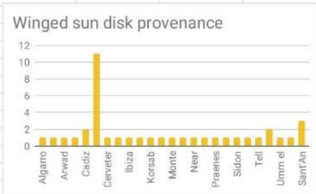


1	10
5	18
7	22









Symbol	Object Type	Museum	Provenance	Date	Notes
Tanit	Stele	Louvre	Constantine	3-2nd c. BC	
Tanit	Stele	Louvre	Constantine	3rd c. BC	
Tanit	Stele	Louvre	Constantine	3rd c. BC	
Tanit	Silver ring	MAN	Ibiza	4-3rd c. BC	
Tanit	Gold earrings	MAN	Ibiza	4-3rd c. BC	
Tanit	Gold earring	MAN	Ibiza	4-3rd c. BC	
Tanit	Pot	MAN	Ibiza	4-3rd c. BC	
Tanit	Bone amulet	MAN	Ibiza	4th c. BC	
Tanit	Bone amulet	MAN	Ibiza	4th c. BC	
Tanit	Stele	Louvre	Maghoura	1st c. AD	
Tanit	Stele	Louvre	Maghoura	2nd c. AD	
Tanit	Scarab	Geneva	North Syria		
Tanit	Stele	Louvre	Sousse	4th c. BC	
Tanit	Stele	Louvre	Sousse	4th c. BC	
Tanit	Stele	Beirut	Tyre	9th c. BC	unsure
Tanit	Stele	Bardo		1st c. BC	
Tanit	Terracotta figurine base	AUB		5th c. BC	could be crescent disc
Tanit	Amulet	MAB	Sant'Antioco	4-3rd c. BC	
Tanit	Amulet	MAB	Sant'Antioco		
Tanit	Amulet	MAB	Sant'Antioco		
Tanit	Amulet	MAB	Sant'Antioco		
Tanit	Stele	Lilibeo	Marsala	2nd c. BC	
Tanit	Stele	Lilibeo	Marsala	1st c. BC	
Tanit	Stele	Lilibeo	Marsala		
Tanit	Stele	Lilibeo	Marsala	4-3rd c. BC	
Tanit	Pot	Lilibeo	Marsala		
Tanit	Pendant	Whitaker	Motya		
Winged sphinx	Sculpture	MAN	Almeria	7th c. BC	
Winged sphinx	Terracotta figurine	Limassol	Amathus	6th c. BC	
Winged sphinx	Scarab	Limassol	Amathus	7-6th c. BC	
Winged sphinx	Silver bowl	BM	Amathus	7th c. BC	
Winged sphinx	Ivory	Louvre	Arslan Tash	8th c. BC	
Winged sphinx	Relief	Louvre	Arwad	9-8th c. BC	
Winged sphinx	Sculpture of Baal Hammon on a throne	Bardo	Bir Bouregba	1st c. BC	
Winged sphinx	Gold earrings	Cyprus	Cyprus	8-5th c. BC	
Winged sphinx	Stele	Damascus	Damascus	9-8th c. BC	
Winged sphinx	Bronze vessel	MAS	El Gandul	7th c. BC	
Winged sphinx	Astarte Throne	Beirut	Eshmun	4-2nd c. BC	Hellenistic
Winged sphinx	Faience amulet	MAN	Ibiza	4-3rd c. BC	
Winged sphinx	Faience amulet	MAN	Ibiza	4-3rd c. BC	
Winged sphinx	Terracotta pinax	MAN	Ibiza	6th c. BC	
Winged sphinx	Ivory plaque	MAN	Ibiza		greek inspired features
Winged sphinx	Silver bowl	Louvre	Idalion	7th c. BC	
Winged sphinx	Gold pendant	BM	Marion	15-4th c. BC	
Winged sphinx	Bronze bowl	Heraklion	Mount Ida	8th c. BC	
Winged sphinx	Ivory plaque	Met	Nimrud	8th c. BC	
Winged sphinx	Ivory plaque	British School in Iraq	Nimrud	8th c. BC	
Winged sphinx	Scarab	Geneva	North Syria		
Winged sphinx	Ivory throne	Cyprus	Salamis	8th c. BC	
Winged sphinx	Scarab	MAS	Sevilla	7th c. BC	
Winged sphinx	Astarte Throne	Louvre	Tyre	2nd c. BC	
Winged sphinx	Astarte Throne	Louvre	Umm el Amed	4th c. BC	
Winged sphinx	Seal	BNF		8th c. BC	
Winged sphinx	Astarte Throne	AUB			
Winged sphinx	Scarab	Ashmolean			
Winged sphinx	Scarab	Ashmolean			
Winged sphinx	Scarab	Cagliari	Tharros		
Winged sphinx	Scarab	Cagliari	Tharros		
Winged sphinx	Astarte Throne	Palermo	Solunto	6th c. BC	
Winged sphinx	Terra cotta throne	Whitaker	Motya	6-5th c. BC	
Winged sun disk	Gold pendant	Malaga	Algarrobo	7th c. BC	
Winged sun disk	Gold and amethyst pendant	MAN	Aliseda	7th c. BC	
Winged sun disk	Stele	Louvre	Arwad	4-3rd c. BC	
Winged sun disk	Stele	Louvre	Byblos	5th c. BC	
Winged sun disk	Scarab ring	MAN	Cadiz	4-3rd c. BC	
Winged sun disk	Gold pendant	Cadiz	Cadiz	6th c. BC	
Winged sun disk	Gold pendant	Carthage	Carthage	4th c. BC	
Winged sun disk	Gold medallion	Louvre	Carthage	7-6th c. BC	
Winged sun disk	Gold medallion	Carthage	Carthage	7-6th c. BC	
Winged sun disk	Gold necklace	Carthage	Carthage	7-6th c. BC	
Winged sun disk	Gold pendant	Carthage	Carthage	7-6th c. BC	
Winged sun disk	Gold pendant	Louvre	Carthage	7-6th c. BC	
Winged sun disk	Gold necklace	Bardo	Carthage	7-6th c. BC	
Winged sun disk	Ivory plaque	Carthage	Carthage	7th c. BC	
Winged sun disk	Gold pendant	Carthage	Carthage	7th c. BC	
Winged sun disk	Gold pendant	Carthage	Carthage	7th c. BC	
Winged sun disk	Gold pendant	Carthage	Carthage		
Winged sun disk	Gold ring	Villa Giulia	Cerveteri		
Winged sun disk	Carnelian gem	BM	Cyprus	15-4th c. BC	
Winged sun disk	Gold pendant	MAN	Ibiza	6th c. BC	
Winged sun disk	Silver bowl	Louvre	Idalion	7th c. BC	
Winged sun disk	Seal	Louvre	Korsabad	8th c. BC	
Winged sun disk	Hathoric capital	Louvre	Larnaca	6th c. BC	
Winged sun disk	Stele	Cagliari	Monte Sirai	5-4th c. BC	
Winged sun disk	Gold pendant	Whitaker	Motya	7-6th c. BC	
Winged sun disk	Gold ring	BNF	Near East	6th c. BC	
Winged sun disk	Ivory plaque	Met	Nimrud	8th c. BC	
Winged sun disk	Silver bowl	Villa Giulia	Praeneste	7th c. BC	
Winged sun disk	Gold belt buckle	Valletta	Rabat	7-6th c. BC	
Winged sun disk	Bracelet with scarab	Beirut	Sidon	5-4th c. BC	
Winged sun disk	Stele	Louvre	Sousse	2nd c. BC	
Winged sun disk	Stele	Louvre	Tell Kazel	9-8th c. BC	
Winged sun disk	Stele	Louvre	Tyre	4-3rd c. BC	
Winged sun disk	Stele	Louvre	Tyre	4th c. BC	

Symbol	Object Type	Museum	Provenance	Date	Notes
Winged sun disk	Astarte Throne	Louvre	Umm el Amed	4th c. BC	
Winged sun disk	Gold necklace	Villajoyosa	Villajoyosa	7-6th c. BC	
Winged sun disk	Scarab	AUB		13-12th c. BC	
Winged sun disk	Stele	AUB		4-2nd c. BC	
Winged sun disk	Stele	AUB		4-3rd c. BC	
Winged sun disk	Stele	Cagliari	Sant'Antioco		
Winged sun disk	Stele	Cagliari	Sant'Antioco		
Winged sun disk	Stele	MAB	Sant'Antioco		

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